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The Massachusetts Review *Winter 1961*

A QUARTERLY OF LITERATURE THE ARTS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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VOL. II NO. 2

THE MASSACHUSETTS REVIEW

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

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Subscriptions: \$5.00 a year, \$1.25 a copy, in the U.S.A.; \$6.00, foreign, including Canada. National distributor: B. DeBoer, 102 Beverly Road, Bloomfield, N. J. Second class postage paid in Amherst, Mass. and at additional mailing offices; return postage guaranteed; form 3579 requested. Manuscripts, with return postage, should be addressed to the Editor; subscriptions and advertising correspondence to the Business Manager. Copyright, 1961, by The Massachusetts Review, Inc. Printed by The Vermont Printing Company, Brattleboro, Vermont; cover by The Meriden Gravure Company. The staff is grateful to the Associate Alumni of the University of Massachusetts and to other patrons for their assistance.

Walt W. Rostow

International Prospects under the New President

THE NEW PRESIDENT confronts a world setting which will require radical change in the American outlook, and this change must—and will—be reflected in new policies. Change is forced upon us by deep-set changes on the world scene. If we are to make history in the 1960's—not merely react to it—our first task is to understand the historical environment that confronts us—the harsh limitations it imposes—and the possibilities for good which may lie implicit within its structure.

I shall elaborate this theme in three stages. First I shall look as an objective social scientist at the nature of change in the key regions of the globe: the Communist bloc, Western Europe, and the underdeveloped areas of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. Second I shall examine, in the light of American interests, the threats and the possibilities opened up for us by the process of change in these regions. And finally I shall suggest the directions in which we must move in order to exploit the possibilities and minimize the threats which arise from our changing historical environment.

I

Now, first, the course of change in the Communist bloc. In the Soviet Union itself we have observed the emergence since 1945 of a society which has now about absorbed into its production all of the major branches of contemporary technology;

This article is based on a talk given in November, 1960 as the first in a series of Alumni Memorial Lectures at the University of Massachusetts.

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which is investing at a somewhat higher rate than the United States; which is allocating to military purposes a very much higher proportion of its income than the United States; and which is growing each year at about twice the rate of the United States. Although Soviet gross national product is less than half our own, each year the increment of output that the Soviet rulers have available for allocation to consumption, investment, and the pursuit of international power is very similar to that which we have available: it comes close to fifteen billion dollars in both cases. And the major thrust remains what it was in Stalin's time: a thrust for enlarged Soviet power on the world scene.

Within Soviet society, too, interesting and cumulative changes are taking place: the proportion of literate and well-trained men and women is increasing; the secret police, while the ultimate authority of the Communist state, has been muted as a force and presence in the society; a pervasive national pride in recent Soviet achievements exists and binds the Russian (but not the East European) empire together; and there is an almost fierce desire, in all sections of the population, for an expansion in economic welfare—food, housing, and the gadgetry of an industrial civilization. Culturally there flows from all this a will to be a dignified part of the international community and, among some at least, a willingness to modify old ideological formulae in the light of changing reality. But all these cross-currents are quite easily kept in hand by a confident, purposeful, and internationally ambitious regime.

There are, of course, other patterns of change occurring within the Communist bloc. Communist China, although moving ahead at a pace similar to that of the Soviet Union, is, perhaps, several generations away from the time when it will have modernized all the branches of its economy; and despite the most ruthless and complete system of state power ever to operate in the rural areas of a great country, the crucial agricultural problem remains unsolved, overhanging the future of Communism there. But its scale, its high allocations to military purposes, and the ambitious thrust of its leadership make China

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evidently a new major power factor on the world scene.

Finally, in Eastern Europe, we see a Communist area wholly lacking the powerful Communist nationalistic cement which, on the whole, supports the Russians and Chinese. Eastern Europe is caught up in a peculiar protracted kind of occupation. The men and women live there in a drab and disheartening setting. The objective of Soviet policy is to make them apathetic, looking only to Moscow as they contemplate the future. Even though despairing of liberation in any time they can foresee, these people nevertheless have remained loyal to their nationhood, to their religion, and to the hope of freedom. They have administered a striking defeat to Communist ideological pretensions, despite their military impotence.

Nevertheless, within this tragic empire, economic growth has proceeded; and military potential has expanded, even though the reliability of Eastern European armed forces would be questionable in a serious engagement between Russia and the West.

Now Western Europe and Japan. Not even at his most optimistic would Paul Hoffman, back in Marshall Plan days, have predicted the economic, political, and social revival which has occurred in Western Europe and Japan in the past fifteen years. What happened was this: after a brief intensive period of reconstruction, the Western European economies entered into that phase of growth which the United States began to enjoy in the 1920's. In its essence, a society at this stage turns its industrial machine to the attainment of new levels of consumption on a mass basis. The symbol and a good part of the substance of this stage is the automobile. This is also the time of suburbia and household gadgets. But more profoundly, it is a time when whole populations come to perceive that, in addition to food, shelter, and clothing, they may enjoy the dignity of homes of their own and the mobility and freedom that come with owning their own means of transport.

This revolution has some interesting and important technical consequences. Among them, it stimulates rapid growth in strip steel, light engineering, plastics, and electronics. Thus one of

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the major consequences of the surge in Western Europe and Japan has been the acquisition of high competence in fields in which the United States has hitherto uniquely excelled; and they now can compete with us on more equal terms than before the Second World War. This is the root cause of our balance of payment difficulties.

Now, finally, the underdeveloped areas. There the story is quite familiar. We all know that Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America—embracing more than a billion human beings within the Free World—are in an active state of modernization. We all know that the outcome of this process will radically alter the setting in which future American generations will live. And yet the prospect is somewhat unreal; for our horizons are normally short, and what press in on us from day to day are the confusions, conflicts, and difficulties in the underdeveloped areas, not their accumulating steps towards modernization. The prospect became real to me, I know, only when I once calculated that when my eight-year-old son comes to maturity, if he is granted the life span of an average American, he will live in a world where India and China, with at least two billion souls between them, command all the tricks of then contemporary technology. Compound interest is enormously powerful; and compound interest has taken hold in those two vast nations.

India may stumble. The remarkable initial success in implanting democratic institutions in India—a success which the British share with the Indians themselves—this *tour de force* may fail, notably if economic progress does not accelerate markedly in the next decade; but the commitment of the Indian peoples to modernize their society is too deep to halt. Similarly, we may see many changes in Communist China over coming years and decades. In my view the initial dispositions made by the aging Communist veterans of the Long March who still run China—a quarter century after the event—may not prove viable. But China will certainly grow and modernize. The great historical watershed between the uprooting of the traditional society and the beginning of regular growth has been passed—a transition which took a full century of trouble in China and

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yielded the compulsive, inhumane regime now installed in Peking.

Moreover, China and India are not alone. Momentum has taken hold in the Philippines; perhaps on Taiwan; certainly in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela. Perhaps, even, in Egypt, Iran, and Iraq.

In many areas, of course, there is stagnation or very slow progress: Indonesia, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon. And despite the tremendous human and political turmoil, the road ahead in Africa south of the desert will be long.

Nevertheless, pressures from within and from without are inexorably pressing these peoples and nations to repeat, in one way or another, some version of the experience through which virtually the whole of the northern half of the world has already passed: that is, the experience of transforming their societies in such ways as to bring to bear all that modern science and technology may offer.

Those of us who live in the northern half of the globe stand in a position somewhat like that of the British in 1815; we know that in the century about to unfold the technological monopoly we now hold will slip away, and that all the values and attitudes and policies which are rooted in this northern monopoly will have to be transformed. Specifically, we must count on a redistribution of power and influence on the face of the globe which will increase the relative authority of those who live in the south, whose influence on great events has, hitherto, been nonexistent or slight.

In social science terms, what can we say in general about these three sets of changes? What they mean, I think, is that the environment of the United States is changing in such ways as to cause a swift and irreversible diffusion of power and authority on the world scene. This is evidently not going to be a century which is dominated in any unilateral way by the United States; nor in my view is it going to be dominated by Russia, China, or any other one nation.

If the world doesn't blow itself up by man's failure to discipline modern weapons of mass destruction, it will be a world

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made up of a good many middling powers.

The diffusion of power has been given a kind of premature reality by the fact that the weapons of mass destruction are not rationally usable so long as the nuclear stalemate is maintained. The Soviet Union, in seeking to expand its influence, and the United States, in seeking to maintain the truce lines that resulted from the Second World War, are therefore forced to deal with the world from day to day not with military force but by means of economic, diplomatic, and psychological instruments which afford even weak powers a remarkably substantial bargaining power. And so despite converging conflicts of interest and ideology, which normally have produced terrible wars in history; despite the fallibility of the men who manage the affairs of both countries, and the temptation somehow to have it out—the fact is that ultimate and rational interests are forcing the United States and Russia into dialogue and towards an isolation of common interests.

It does not require much of a prophetic gift to foresee increasingly intensive US-USSR discussions on arms control over the next months and years; for both countries face the disturbing consequences of the diffusion of power on the world scene and that peculiarly dangerous form of it which involves the distribution of the power to make atomic weapons.

II

I turn now to the second part of my thesis, which is concerned with the threats and possibilities to the American interest opened up by these fundamental changes in our historical environment. The American interest is to preserve an environment for our free, open, and humanistic society which will permit it to continue to develop in terms of the fundamental values we chose when we asserted nationhood late in the eighteenth century. A part of the job of protecting the American interest is military. There is no point in brooding about the quality of our society and its values if we suffer military defeat or its equivalent. On the other hand, the threats to the United States transcend military ones; they include the threat to the democratic

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principle on the world scene.

There is nothing in the national interest or in the American creed which demands that we dominate the rest of the world; but there is much in our tradition and our way of life which requires that we be the defender and promoter of the democratic cause on the world scene. It is to our interest that American society be surrounded by others which are organized on some version of the democratic principle. Put another way, our kind of society cannot thrive in a world where we would be a garrison state—a kind of rich man on the hill—surrounded by hostile totalitarian states.

Our society could be threatened, moreover, not merely by military defeat or by the defeat of the democratic principle; it could be threatened by war itself, given the nature of modern weapons. It is, therefore, an active part of the American interest to protect ourselves and to do what we can to support the democratic principle on the world scene by peaceful means.

In the light of this statement of the national interest, what can we now say about the threats and possibilities we confront?

First, as to the Soviet Union. In policy terms, the threat posed for us by the Soviet Union is symbolized by the fact that a nation with half our gross national product, living at about a third our standard of welfare, is spending as much on military affairs as we are; in certain key areas of military technology it is ahead of us; moreover, it is putting seventy-five per cent as many technicians and fifty per cent as much capital as we into the non-Communist world, quite aside from its allocations of men and credit within the Communist bloc.

In a larger sense, the achievement of technological maturity in the Soviet Union combined with its rate of growth now permit Moscow to mount and to sustain a whole series of threats to the American and to the Free World position. In the immediate post-war years, the Soviet threat mainly consisted of massive ground forces. In trying to make good his threat to bury us, Khrushchev now commands instruments ranging from long-range missiles to the insidious notion that Russia is superseding the United States as the world's front runner in wealth,

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education, and culture, as well as in space technology; and that it is the Soviet, not the American, example on which other nations should model themselves.

Aside from the direct military threat, the greatest threat represented by the Communist bloc, in my view, is the threat it projects to the underdeveloped areas. That threat cannot be measured in terms of Soviet trade and aid policies. A "numbers racket" approach to American and Soviet aid misses the point. The basic question is this: will the new nations evolve in forms which leave open the possibility of their development as modern democratic societies; or will they, in their crucial transitional years, despair of the techniques of democracy and accept totalitarian methods in the belief that only such methods can yield rapid modernization?

It is not Soviet economic aid and trade that threaten us in Latin America and elsewhere, but rather the attractiveness of the Communist method as a device for organizing the rapid modernization of an underdeveloped society.

The struggle could go either way. Given the inherent difficulties of the transition under regimes having high rates of population increase and the lack of open frontiers, and given also the high expectations for rapid progress that are stimulated by the intensity of international communications, it is apparent that, if progress does not become a palpable reality soon, some of the new nations may well accept Communist or other totalitarian forms of organization in order to achieve the unity, discipline, and high investment rates that rapid growth demands.

On the other hand, all of the non-Western cultures—and one might add the cultures of China and Russia as well—have deeply embedded within them values which set a high premium on the worth of the individual and which react against the claims of an all-powerful state. More than that, the resistance to Communism and the commitment to democratic aspiration go deeper in many of these nations than we often credit, deeper than the relatively low state of democratic practice would suggest. Finally, the technical problems of the transition are by no means insoluble if the local governments and leadership groups

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focus their minds on the job and if the United States and the West provide them with adequate and sustained assistance in capital and technique. This we have not yet done.

We know enough about this set of problems to say this much: the cause of democracy may well fail in the underdeveloped areas; but there is nothing in the modernization process and nothing in the situation as it now stands in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America that makes such failure inevitable.

What I am asserting, then, is that while the threat is real, the ideological struggle in the underdeveloped areas is by no means lost. The possibility of victory is still open to us if we are patient and purposeful, and prepared to back our play with insight and resources.

Now let us turn back to the Soviet Union, and pose this question: What possibilities are there for change favorable to the American interest in Soviet attitudes and policy? Specifically, what possibility is there that the Soviet Union will accept a system of international armaments control backed by an effective inspection system?

There is no reason to believe that, in part of their minds, Mr. Khrushchev and his colleagues do not believe precisely what they say. What they say is that they now believe that they will see the total victory of Communism on the world scene without a major war. This hope is based on the faith in Moscow that the western countries and the non-Communist leaders in the underdeveloped areas will be unable to see their countries through modernization under present political auspices; and that, in time, they will turn to Communism. They envisage over the next twenty years or so the same kind of evolution in these areas that occurred in China between 1927 and 1949. Their view of Nehru and Nasser and the Shah of Iran is similar to their view of Chiang Kai-Shek. The Communist leaders believe that these men will fail and that their western friends and the United States will fail them. They believe Communism will be the residual legatee of that failure.

This is an active and confident faith. I shall never forget

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the final statement of a passionate Communist with whom I debated this matter. He said, "Of course you could do the job; but the book you wrote with Millikan is utopian. Mark my words. You will not do the job, and we shall take over." I travelled in the European Communist areas at the peak of the crisis over Berlin; everywhere I went, the country on which research was being done and on which their thoughts were centered was India, not Germany.

As they view the world from Moscow, Eastern Europe and Eastern Germany comprise an area where they wish to hold the line, to encourage apathy and fatalism, while they proceed with rapid economic growth in Russia and to ideological victory in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.

But there are also things on the minds of Mr. Khrushchev and his colleagues about which they do not talk, at least to us. Their hopeful vision of victory in the underdeveloped areas is clouded by two further aspects of the world scene.

The first of them is this: the capacity of nations to produce fusion weapons (that is, H-bombs) is rapidly spreading; and so long as the cold war continues, and an effective arms control agreement is not made, that capacity will continue to spread. (This assumes, of course, that the United States continues to maintain such military strength that it remains irrational for Moscow to envisage a missile salvo against our bases and our society.) Without question, it is the fear of the dangers to the Soviet Union that might arise as the number of nuclear powers increases that has led to the negotiations for the cessation of nuclear tests—a negotiation that has survived the U-2 incident and the shoe-waving in New York because the Russians are deeply interested in it. What Moscow would appear to want is a situation in which some kind of freeze occurs in the military situation without an effective inspection system, their Eastern European empire is held and recognized as legal by the West, and the cold war would focus on the struggle for power and ideology in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. But, as I say, their hopes in the underdeveloped areas are shadowed somewhat by the unresolved problem of how to pre-

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vent the spread of nuclear weapons into the hands of nations whose use of them—or the threat of their use—might take situations dangerously out of Moscow's control.

The second worry which Mr. Khrushchev and his colleagues do not discuss with us is the question of China and its meaning. Although the alliance between Russia and China has been very close since 1949, the fact is that the Soviet Union has never been able to control the Chinese Communist army and secret police. Whatever the outcome of the recent Sino-Soviet discussions in Moscow, there can be little doubt that the Russians are beginning to think of China as a problem; and the prospect that China might soon have independent control over nuclear weapons, with which it might create situations which might embroil Russia in a major war at Chinese initiative, is a latent nightmare. There is little doubt that the present rulers of China regard a major war with a certain cavalier air—the consequence of having a population of more than 600 million and a considerable ignorance of nuclear weapons. And if the Russians look out beyond China to the other underdeveloped areas, and conclude that they will not be able to exercise any more control over them than they now exercise over China, the element of nightmare extends.

It was for that reason that, when I was asked to talk in Moscow on peaceful coexistence in the underdeveloped areas, I said this:

Why should not the Soviet Union now join in an effective system of arms control, based on relatively free inspection?

The prospect for the Soviet Union, as for the United States, is to see many new nations come into the world arena which neither the Soviet Union nor the United States can effectively control. As atomic weapon capabilities spread, these new nations will be in a position to take actions which might precipitate a war equally disastrous to Russian and to American interests.

As we look out on the world, with vast areas moving into the preconditions and the take-off, it is clear that history is creating a world of a good many middling powers. The Soviet Union and the United States stand at an interval of relative primacy; but that primacy is

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transient. We can use that interval to contest with one another; we can dissipate this interval in a cold war for which history will offer us little respect and little thanks; we can, clearly, destroy each other and most of the planet in a hot war, if we fail to maintain our poise and good sense. But there is also a great constructive option open to us both. We can use this interval to create an effective system of arms control and to concentrate our efforts, along with those of others, on making that system work. The common objective should be to make the system of arms control so solid and secure over the coming decades that as the new nations move to technological maturity, they enter a world of orderly politics rather than one where the power struggle persists with weapons of mass destruction still one of the pawns.

When I spoke these words in Moscow I was under no illusion that this was, in fact, their prevailing view. But I am reasonably sure that what I said was understood and matched the dark, quiet thoughts of some who heard me and later read what I had said.

Thus, if I am correct, the men in Moscow are caught between two visions of the future: one, the vision they have articulated at the Twentieth and Twenty-First Party Congresses in Moscow and which Mr. Khrushchev projects when he says he will bury us. That vision is, essentially, of an ideological victory in the underdeveloped areas which will give to Communism the balance of world power and which will isolate the United States and Western Europe as the rich men on the hill, to be dealt with at leisure by a predominant Communist world empire. The other vision is of a world where power, including the power of nuclear weapons, is being diffused in ways which threaten the Russian interest; and in which the only logical course is to make common cause with the United States to establish a minimum framework of order. In the past year the second vision has been reinforced by the course of Sino-Soviet relations and by the break-through in cheap methods for producing atomic materials achieved in Germany.

The first of these visions is, if you like, a vision of Communist hope; the other is a vision of Russian national fear.

Which vision ultimately dominates Moscow's policy depends,

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I believe, on two great factors: the military strength and cohesiveness of the Free World, and the evolution of politics and ideology in the underdeveloped areas. If, for example, India should fail in the next decade under democratic auspices and in association with the western world, and if it should turn to Communism, the vision of Communist hope will be vastly strengthened. Moscow will be tempted to maintain its power bloc, to try to cope with the diffusion of nuclear weapons as best it can on that basis, and to press on towards world power. It will know that if India fails, the chances for democracy throughout Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America will be desperately weakened; and that the prospects for Communism will be so strengthened as to justify a thrust for total victory.

If, on the other hand, India succeeds in making a successful transition into self-sustained growth during the coming decade under democratic auspices, in association with the United States and Western Europe, Moscow will know that throughout the underdeveloped areas, men will say: "We do not need totalitarian methods to modernize." In effect, the ideological battle will be lost. If India could do the job under democratic banners, others will know that they too can do it.

Under such circumstances there would be a decent hope, at least, that the Russian fears—which Khrushchev now represses—may come to the fore; and the setting may at last exist in which something like a peace can be drawn up between the United States and the Soviet Union.

If Soviet policy should turn seriously toward the making of an effective system of arms control, I believe it will do so mainly because the Russians have come to perceive that the diffusion of power on the world scene is a danger to Russian interests. But to some degree, this shift, if and when it comes about, will be supported by the dynamics of change within Soviet society. I do not believe that in any automatic way rich societies are necessarily peaceful; but I do believe that the expansion of living standards within the Soviet Union and the wide-spread desire to lift and to keep the secret police off

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citizens' backs tend to develop vested interests which, in time, will make it easier for Russians to view the world in terms of the protection of Russian interests rather than in terms of the Messianic spread of Communist doctrine. I would be seriously misunderstood if this argument were read as supporting the view that in time peace will automatically break out without extraordinary American exertions and initiatives. Peace, if and when it comes, will emerge as the result of a change in Soviet policy brought about by the military strength, cohesiveness, and ideological success of Free World policy.

Now what about the threats and possibilities which arise from the resurgence of Western Europe and Japan? The threats are clear enough.

In Europe we see a dangerous split between France and Germany on the one hand, and Britain on the other; and, as part of that split, we observe the dangerous economic clash between the Common Market and the Outer Seven.

In France we see a nation, resenting deeply the special Anglo-American relationship in atomic matters, pressing on with great and inefficient expenditure to create its own nuclear weapons, while ordering the removal from French soil of all American nuclear retaliatory power. At home our industry is feeling the competitive weight of the improved productivity in Western Europe and Japan as their producers cut into American exports and into our home market.

Evidently the new capabilities of Western Europe and Japan offer the possibility of their adding strength—military, economic, and political—to the Free World alliance. But it is clear that American and Free World policy, still gripped in the formulae of 1947-1950 when Western Europe and Japan were weak and impotent, has not mastered and made constructive these new strong forces within the Free World.

Moreover, the Free World alliance has no common policy towards the crucial underdeveloped areas. Each colonial power has suffered alone, as it were, the pain of giving up its old possessions; and we have created neither the vision nor the substance of an Atlantic policy which would link the richer

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nations of the Free World with the poorer nations in new relationships of partnership.

In general, then, with respect to the Communist bloc, the underdeveloped areas, Western Europe, and Japan, the situation is this: we are experiencing the increased threats which arise from our changing historical environment, but we have not effectively exploited the possibilities for good which that environment contains.

III

Now finally, what is it that we must do? What should the policy of the United States be in the face of our changing historical environment? What objectives should the new administration pursue?

By our military dispositions, we must continue to make either major or limited war an irrational undertaking for Communists. On this basis we must use our economic resources and our political and human insight to the full in doing what we can to insure that the nations of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America remain independent and move through their difficult transitions to modernization in ways which keep open the possibility of a democratic evolution for their societies. In order to execute these military and creative missions, we must frame a new set of relationships with the resurgent nations of Western Europe and Japan. And from this solid free-world base, we must maintain an endless diplomatic initiative and an endless sympathetic dialogue with the Soviet leadership, seeking to exploit every serious possibility for movement toward the effective international control of armaments.

If this is the policy we need to deal with our changing historical environment, the operational agenda that confronts us—and quite specifically confronts the president—is long and complicated.

We shall need a larger federal budget. There are many important things that we must do in military and foreign policy where money is not enough. In many directions we need ideas, technical innovations, human insight and, simply, first-rate

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men. But there is a hard core of things that must be done which do require more money. We need money, for example, to reduce the military risks during the period when our retaliatory power is potentially vulnerable to Soviet long-range missiles. We need money to build and give adequate mobility to conventional forces designed to deter limited war. We need money to bring the Development Loan Fund up from the level which the President has proposed—of \$700 million for one year—to about \$1.5 billion per year on a long-term basis—the figure which the Senate Foreign Relations Committee proposed at the last session of the Congress and which the old administration failed to support. More money is an essential part of the job, and I am very sceptical of those who would do everything to protect the national interest except spend more money; but as I say, money is not all of the job.

With respect to Western Europe, for example, our problem is not money. We face there the wholly constructive challenge of remaking the alliance in all its essential dimensions.

In NATO we must design a relationship which gives access to nuclear information and weapons where they are functionally needed in the common interest to all our partners. But we must do this without giving any one of them an independent nuclear force capable of use except in the common interest. The most promising formula appears to be a NATO nuclear deterrent supplementary to our own; and there is good reason to hope that the British and the French would be prepared to surrender their national nuclear capabilities within such a framework. On that basis, at last, the resources of scientific and technical skill of Western Europe might be added to our own in such a way as to make the notion of a Soviet missile salvo aimed against the Free World's deterrent force considerably less of a rational possibility than it might otherwise be over the next few years. More than that, we might thus satisfy our allies' wholly legitimate desire to be our military partners rather than second-class satellites, as they must remain under the provisions of the McMahon Act.

In economic policy an exciting and constructive task awaits

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us. We need to outflank the split between the Common Market and the Outer Seven by leading the way towards a general Free World trade and payments policy in which tariff barriers would be reduced, including the barriers to the purchase of American goods which arose in the post-war period of dollar shortage. If American exporters are energetic and pay attention to their markets and their productivity, I have no doubt that a large part of the American balance of payments deficit could be reduced in such a setting. We must also find a new and more economical way of organizing the Free World's gold and currency reserves. The dollar has borne an unnatural burden as a reserve currency at a time when Free World trade has been expanding much more rapidly than gold production. Each nation has kept a different reserve ratio; and the major Free World nations have not sufficiently moved to support each other in periods of strain.

And finally, if the United States is serious about economic development in the underdeveloped areas, I believe there is in Western Europe and Japan—and also in Canada, incidentally—the will, as well as the resources, roughly to match the American effort. We should have something like an additional \$2 billion flowing into Free Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America each year. And this I believe lies wholly within the bounds of realistic politics and statesmanship. On the basis of this enlarged and coordinated Free World effort, we could begin to give some substance to the notion of a non-colonial partnership between the richer and poorer parts of the Free World. The World Bank mission to India and Pakistan last year—with American, British, and German representation—may prove historically to foreshadow what we must learn to do on a wider basis.

Against the background of these shifts in American and Free World policy, we might be able to confront the Soviet Union with a new poise.

The problem of dealing with Moscow is one of the most searching which Americans have ever confronted. How does one sustain simultaneously the conception of mortal enemy and

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of potential fellow citizen on a crowded and increasingly inter-dependent planet? Our task is to stint nothing in our military policy which would make Communist aggression irrational. And the utmost firmness is required in diplomacy, as well, in protecting the borders of the Free World. Firmness and strength are not alternatives to the pursuit of peace. They are its minimum conditions.

There is no use—no effectiveness—in projecting the sincerity of our desire for peace if at the same time we present to the men in Moscow the possibilities for expanding their power or influence by hard means or by soft; via missiles or via infantry; via diplomacy or ideology. By our performance we must steadily leave only one realistic option open to them aside from the *status quo*; and that is to move seriously towards peace. But at the same time we Americans must strain to understand with intellectual and moral humility the complex processes taking place in the Communist bloc. And here in all conscience we still have much to do.

Take, for example, the field of arms control. Our proposals for the control of armaments have been piecemeal; and although I believe them to have been sincere, our staff work has been weak. I doubt whether we really know how to set up and operate an effective system of aerial inspection or what the most economical way might be to police on the ground an arms control agreement. I, for one, do not expect peace to break out tomorrow. At the best, I think the creation and the negotiation of an effective arms control agreement will take a long time, if and when it comes. Nevertheless, we have a duty to ourselves and to the world—and to the Russians also—to hold up a much more concrete vision of what we are trying to bring about than any we have hitherto formulated. We must recapture the initiative in moving towards peace over a wide front; but again I cannot emphasize too strongly that such initiatives will be empty and lack response if they do not arise from a Free World which has mobilized its strength, formulated its positive purposes, and is in command of its inner problems. Perhaps the most important single appointment President Kennedy has to

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make is the appointment of his special assistant for arms control staff work and negotiation.

IV

The vision I have held up of the historical environment we are likely to confront is, in one sense, a sobering vision for Americans. It promises no automatic success; it promises no results to the American advantage without proportionate American effort; it promises no American century; it does not promise that all will be well if we go about our business and balance the budget. History will grant us no cheap successes in the future. If my view is correct, we must cope with powerful and assertive forces arising not only from the Communist bloc and in the underdeveloped areas but also in Western Europe and Japan, whose alliance we have too easily taken for granted. On the other hand, the future offers to the next generation of Americans a challenge far more interesting than the notion that we are an affluent society, and that our only problem is to use our leisure decently. The world environment we confront demands that we in our generation prove what other generations of Americans have had to prove in the face of different agenda. It demands that we remain loyal to the sense of democratic mission which is at the root of our nationhood, and demonstrate once again that democracy is not the absurdity dictators and autocrats have always believed it to be.

The transcendent quality which has long suffused American life and which still gives it a special worth is not the opulence of our resources or any other local dimension of our society, its structure, or its institutions. That special quality is the conviction that the adventure of America has meaning and relevance for the world as a whole. Having been blessed with a rich and handsome physical endowment, protected for a century from the pressures and strains of the world arena, permitted by our allies the luxury of a further half-century in the role of strategic reserve with limited responsibilities, now the nation faces the test of its worth—a test of the meaning of our history.

The role of the United States in determining the outcome

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of the world's history over coming decades will, of course, be marginal; and success cannot be assured. Moreover, nations, like people, are complex units, seeking many objectives simultaneously; and the round of American life will be taken up with many matters other than this. Nevertheless, an outcome consonant with the hopes of the world's peoples cannot be brought about unless American public policy perceives its mission in such terms, dedicates itself to that mission, and acts upon that dedication with a substantial proportion of its energies, talents, resources. It is equally clear that a United States which failed to undertake the mission in high seriousness would be in default to the best within it and to the generations of striving men and women who, while bringing America to its present material and military eminence, never lost faith in its larger meaning and purpose.

This, in my view, is the central mission of President Kennedy. I believe he has the duty and the opportunity to rouse and stir our nation; to provide the basis here for a sustained drive on the world scene which will deflect the dangers we confront and exploit the possibilities for creating a new partnership with the underdeveloped areas; for giving a new vitality to our links with Western Europe and Japan; and for persuading the Communist powers that the weapons which overshadow our lives must be brought under international discipline and control.

And this is precisely what I believe he intends to do.

Paul Ramsey

SATAN

Now curl about your wisdom, and be still,
Old serpent tooth. Why wander when your will
Is fixed past any motion in its cold?
The land you chose to leave has not grown old
Though you are older now than any sea,
More salt, more cold, more lonely, and less free,
And yet you range and will not let us be.

EVEN UMPIRES WAGER WITH PASCAL

Say it is a nice curve. It flanks the eye,
Hovers, then breaks and there, there perfect, or
Perhaps not quite, and thus not there at all,
And yet you crouch and by the gods must choose.
Say you choose well, say ill. The screams are loud.
You do not know. "Blind! blind!" they cry, and you
Are wastrel to their fury, win or lose,
Though none can win without the likes of you.

SPRING DAY FOR FISHING

Deep in recovery of body's sense,
He lets the spring grass bend, the light resist
The buck and flow of water, brisk and dense
In the cool glare. Wind rises, drops. The wrist
Awaits its pleasure where the silence flows.
The fishes flash of silver and repose.

Jack Anderson

POSTCARD FROM HOME

While carousels whirled faster,
Stiff generals on stone horses
Entertained the gadding birds
And lagoons burst with petals.

The park was full of babies
And nurses in white aprons
Who gossiped by the fountain
Where the marble dolphins stretched
Cold heads beyond trade secrets
Of diapers, pins, and bottles.

Parading governesses,
Each a Queen Victoria with
A parasol, watched children
In sandals and pinafores
Dance against the pastel sky.

This day was as improvised
As a trimmed jumping poodle;
This day should have been a sketch
Of Paris or the backdrop
For *opera bouffe*; and yet
It was here at home among
The ordinary chimneys
Where the Park Board gardener
Had measured out the rows.

THE POLISH WOMEN

Blood sausage
My God! The Polish women
stand in line for it
Or they go to Schuster's
and pull at dresses
or scarves
The whole store stinks
of potato salad
and sausage
the blood sausage
they stand in line for
babushkas on their heads
They live in frame houses
someone always rents
the basement
Their legs are fat and veined
Their husbands drink beer
Their sons play the accordion
Mrs. Krepczynski tried
to change her name to Krep
was persuaded not to
She's there with her kids
wants Long Johns for breakfast
blood sausage for lunch
They believe everything
a priest tells them
—or so my German grandmother
told me

MIDSUMMER MORNING

1

Midsummer morning and it is dark again
In the back parlors of the brain,
The hanging masks—those granite faces—dark.
I rise from the sacred well
And watch the shadows on the wall
Change from standing stones to chairs.
I rise dripping with summer and sleep
Upon the moor of my bed, sheets in a heap,
Pillow on floor, no drums on this moor.
The sun wheel turns in the mill of the sky.
I stretch and begin the day.

2

It is a comfort and a right
To brush the teeth and tie the tie
And tell the fellow in the glass,
“How good you look. Ay, you are I.”
How wonderful to put on shoes
And whistle coming down the stair,
To skip a step and bound below
Assured there is a landing there;
And read the headlines, comforted
With coffee cup in hand, and then
To do the crosswords on the bus:
How good to start the day again.

3

But in the heat of mid-afternoon
When collars are damp and steps slow down,
The premonitions come.

Short of breath, I stand in the street
And watch with my eyes full of sweat
How the offices quiver and try to escape.
Color of air, the heat
Turns like a snake in the street;
The offices scratch at the sun.
Elevators fall into wells
And the people toss on the concrete sea,
Gasping for air as they pass me by.
Their faces stretch into rocks;
The tapers are trimmed at the back of my mind;
And the disk of sunlight breaks.

4

Here in the sudden heat lightning of home
Where the skyline forms a circle of stone
I toss my spears into passing shadows,
My lips grow heavy, my eyes upturn.
Deep, deep, I must go down
Deep in the well where the water chokes,
Down to the altar high on the plain
Where the knives are raised in summer thunder.
Black candles twist on the lamp-post tops;
Merlin's wand is in my hand;
I, Moloch, lord on Easter Island,
Caliban king on Sarum Plain.
The streets point straight to the sunrise point.
Façades are rotting, dolmens rise.
I dredge up masks and drums from sleep.
The clock turns back as the blades sink deep.
The iron sings as it seeks the heart.
Drenched with blood, toward the woods I run.
Midsummer morning, midsummer sun
Rips across Stonehenge.

Margaret Mathison

A Bellini in the Family

BURGO DEBORN was in Florence on a year's grant of money for his work as a sculptor in America. On an ordinary working day he put aside many positively non-creative thoughts. If he did not overwhelm them, he got no work done. And what did Florence say through her abundance of magnificent art to the struggling Burgo? Sometimes Florence herself overwhelmed him.

This was an ordinary working day. His studio was full of smoke and the fumes of melting wax. His younger boy Roger, after the afternoon's rest, was climbing back on the crate to pose. Burgo saw his wife looking out of the window for their other boy John, who had not come back from his guitar lesson. Burgo looked past her, at the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio and the Duomo of Brunelleschi, then out of another window up the hill, to the cypresses along the top. "John's hanging around the arch, hoping that the girl will come out again," Burgo said, stroking the wax form of the statue he was now working on.

Burgo laughed, remembering how twelve-year-old John had blushed when a pretty girl, at the Costa San Giorgio arch, had put her hand on John's face caressingly and said, "Bello! Bello!" He looked back at his wife and past her at the view up the hill. If you thought only of forced filling of space and of a slice of this fill, the profile of the buildings told him that the development of cubism was inevitable.

"She could have caressed me," Burgo said, laughing.

"Oh Burgo," Nina said, not very angry with him. But there

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was something. Once she told him that he should try to play all his roles at once. She said that he wanted the children to do what he asked, but did not want to be the one to train them.

He sighed and settled to work. In the people of Italy he found the same mixture of reckless good humor and instinctive insistence on human magnanimity that people had always found in him. Here art was not a six-toed cat. His being a sculptor was perfectly all right with everybody. If you modeled in clay, the foundry sent a plaster-caster to the studio to encase your clay model and get it back safely. The only trouble with the precious year was that it was bound to pass by.

While the year lasted it was unique. Today he felt full of a limitless power and surrounded by favor and sympathy. Here in Italy they put up posters all over, advertising art shows, because they were everybody's concern, like proclamations of Napoleon's victories that were said to have been on every village wall. He loved the people of Italy. To Burgo their country was like an empire, under Pax Artistica, and Florence—above all, Florence—was eager to communicate an invaluable content. It trembled on the faces of people he passed in the streets, and was present also in the ancient stones of arches and facings, buildings and walls, and in all the sculpture. Looking out again at gay-skinned Florence, he saw that some of the weathered stones were revealed because a building had fallen. Beauty? But since not an intended beauty, as in any ruin. . . .

Burgo became aware of the excited voices in the street. He and Nina ran to the front window. The studio building was on an old Roman road, cobbled and narrow. The building fronts on both sides rose up six stories from the edge of the street, allowing no space for curb or sidewalk. A middle-aged woman was talking violently to a young man, and when he answered her, he was violent. The shoemaker and the dairy-store owner stepped within their street floor shops and slammed the doors. All over the building fronts, on Burgo's side and across, windows opened and men and women put out their heads. Everyone began to shout. The cobbled street was ringing with noise. Suddenly the young man slapped the woman and walked away

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down the hill, with the proud step of a lion within his own law. When he turned out of sight, the woman fainted.

A bottle of water inside a basket swung down past their window, being lowered by a cautious well-wisher who hung out of his window a few floors up. He shouted at the woman, and others also joined in, to announce the arrival of the water. When the dairy-store owner down on the street opened his door and stepped out, a great cheer went up. He now went to the woman and helped her to her feet. She drank some water, and was finally able to go off by herself.

Nina said, "That we should see a woman struck!" Roger climbed back up on his pedestal crate. "Here comes John," Nina said, and sat down peacefully to her sewing.

But when John got to the studio, she made him explain where he had been, and he told her that his lesson never would be over exactly when she thought it should be, so she might as well relax.

Roger said, "Did you see that fight?"

"I saw a fellow duck and run at the bottom of the hill," John said. "I thought he was being chased."

"So he wasn't so sure of himself," Nina said.

"What did he do?" John asked.

"He quarreled with a woman and hit her, and ran," Roger told him.

"That could happen anywhere," John said. He was old enough to be on a search for the typical. He felt that he had not discovered the real Italy yet.

No one answered him. Burgo went on working.

He let the fire die down. The daylight was starting to fail. They would soon be complaining that they could not read, and Roger would be ready to stop, as soon as the first complaint should be made. Today it was Nina who broke down first. "Let's try our antique dealer's shop before it's too dark," she said. Burgo smiled. This was their most winning excuse for ending the day's work and going out into the streets, for they had never found the dealer in.

Nina got up and stretched. She gathered her things, her

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sewing and books, her coat, and Roger's clothes. Roger looked at Burgo. "Is it all right, Dad?"

"All right, Roger." Roger jumped down.

John went on reading while Burgo was finishing. Roger dressed quickly. The heat in the studio was nearly gone, by the time they were ready.

On their walk they were cold. They hurried down the hill and turned towards the Arno. They passed the Ponte Vecchio and angled off away from it. They walked for about ten minutes, to reach their antique shop. It was closed.

They were turning away when a man bicycled up, hauling a cart whose contents were covered with canvas. He jumped down and greeted them and invited them in. It was the dealer! At last they were to enter "their" antique shop. Burgo helped the dealer carry in a large painting which was the cargo in the cart. There was enough light left for Burgo to read the brass plate attached to the heavy frame: *Bellini*.

"Where did you get this?" Burgo asked interestedly. The man had been described to them as a dealer in furniture.

"It's earnest on a debt."

"You mean it's yours if the debt isn't paid?"

"Yes, in thirty days it must be paid or the painting is mine."

Maybe the family who owns it is hiding it from a tax collector? Burgo tried to fight the feverish excitement that was spreading through him. He knew that a Bellini would be a state treasure, not allowed out of Italy by law.

"Would you sell it to me?" Burgo asked.

The dealer thought he would; yes, he would let Burgo have the first chance if such a chance came. Burgo could have it for five hundred dollars.

Burgo looked down at the picture. "Anybody got a flashlight?" he asked, trying to use a comical tone to cover his excitement. "May I light a match?" He knelt down in front of the picture, which had been put against a large table. He struck a match. In this little light a Madonna looked down at her fuzzy-haired baby, and two figures on each side of her looked in, one at her and one at the baby. He lit another match. The painting

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had the very light quality of a Bellini, painted on a white gesso cover. It was on wood. You couldn't put it under a car hood.

He lit another match. It was a lovely painting. "Bello! Bello!" he said. John and the dealer agreed. Even if not a genuine Giovanni Bellini, Burgo still wanted it. He stood up. Nina and Roger were prowling around among the tables and chairs. Why would this man give him the first chance at a Bellini? He hadn't even mentioned who sent him. They talked a little while. It was very cold and very dark.

"Come back tomorrow morning," the man said. "I can show you my things."

Burgo gathered his family and they went out, and walked along towards Gino's, where they often had dinner.

"In thirty days, and tomorrow will be twenty-nine, he will sell it to me for five hundred dollars," Burgo said. He looked at his wife. He saw both disbelief and stubborn opposition on her face. "Berenson was always finding pictures in junk shops, and if that is a Bellini, we could sell it in the U.S.A. for fifty thousand dollars. Roger Fry found a Jacopo Bellini in a Venetian palace and bought it for a ridiculously low sum."

"Where did this Roger Fry get the low sum?"

Of course Nina should have asked him if Roger Fry had ever convinced the National Gallery that his find was genuine. Burgo said, "Well, Roger floated a loan among loving relatives and so could we."

"How would you get it out of Italy? Paint over it? Paint over a Bellini?"

They were thinking of the joke they'd heard of the American who did smuggle an Old Master out, and his expert restorer in New York wired him that he had removed the impressionist painting and the Old Master and was down to a portrait of Mussolini and what should he do? Of course, the state could hardly escape noticing that its greatest resource was in the treasure of art created by its people. But their protective law was like American prohibition: it seemed to conflict with a human impulse. They knew of a farmer in Italy who dug up ancient building-pieces while tilling the soil and buried them again be-

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cause of the undoubted loss of arable land when the government would make him preserve the ancient building, claiming it as a national treasure.

Could the painting be a Giovanni Bellini? It could be. Bellini lived a very long time and painted many pictures, including many for private families. They had these treasures in their palazzos and, within their own tradition, they would know that such a treasure was perfectly genuine. He must remember to ask to see the note that connected the picture with a family.

"I don't know how I'll get it out of Italy," Burgo said. "The trouble right now is that I'm an artist and not an art historian."

"Amen," Nina said fervently.

Burgo was miserable at dinner. A large party near them was so loud that he could hardly carry on his argument with himself. He had never had a great regard for expertise. Now if he went to work on the quirks of Giovanni Bellini, he would be like a performer who can play one piece only. And what if he came out with a negative answer: the dealer's Madonna is not, we think, by Bellini but by some minor Venetian artist, probably Mazzoloa Desenzano, working under the influence of Mantegna.

"Look at that boy," he heard a man say. "Do look at that face."

Burgo saw that they were staring at Roger.

"I wish I could be here longer. I ought to paint him," the man said, as if Roger had not had a face before.

The large woman at the table with the noisy group turned slowly, and when he saw her face, Burgo recognized her as the star who had come to sing in Florence for some performances during the month. She studied Burgo, John, Roger and, finally, Nina. Then she turned back to the man at her side.

"Yes, you should paint him," she said, filling the room with her voice.

Burgo thought that he could probably sell the frame alone in the U.S.A. for five hundred dollars. He remembered that it was heavily carved. A friend of theirs bought Italian frames in New York City. He marked them up three times because of his

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business costs. This frame could stand the strain of such a markup. It was very beautiful. And it was right with the painting.

The loud-mouthed people went on talking about Roger and how if their painter couldn't do him, someone must. Burgo caught the proprietor's eye. Gino was going to wink. Then he saw that Burgo was angry. He raised his hands to heaven, and shrugged his shoulders up to his ears.

Burgo didn't have much regard for people who had to be assured that a picture was genuine. He knew that the picture which he had looked upon was lovely, and he wanted it. But if he had to endure the guilt of what it would take to get it out of the country, maybe it should be genuine. This might be the only chance at a fortune that would ever come their way.

He glared at the singer. When she asked for wine, she seemed to be vocalizing. "Let's get out of here," he said to Nina. When he paid Gino, he said, "If you let that *girl of the golden ouest* in again, we'll withdraw our napkin rings." Gino looked sad.

Outside in the street, Nina looked sad also. "There was nothing wrong with those people, Burgo."

"I am giving Roger a face," he said angrily. He took her arm and they went off. "We won't go to the studio tomorrow," he said, after a silence. "I'll have to refresh my mind on Bellini."

"What about Roger's face?" She got no answer.

During the night the very compelling sound of a motor scooter in the street below was the perfect complement to Burgo's feverish plans. As the driver roared the scooter away and made a turn, the noise abated. And as the man started back, so the protests of everyone along the street rose up to confront him. Burgo was half laughing at the interest they all took in the machine and in their sleep, probably in equal parts. But he was tired.

He ran and got some water and waited for the man to return beneath his windows. He poured the water down and made a direct hit. After all of the noise, the silence was shocking.

And now the much smaller sound of the starter could be

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heard. The street was filling with people, all of whom wished to help with the machine. The man kicked the starter over and over but the engine did not work. He had to wheel it away. Burgo laughed wildly. Now he wanted to help him.

When he got back into bed with Nina, he said, "I could belong here, even to Mother Church. I could sit at Mass and eat bread and cheese in the corner and change the baby."

"You're an outsider," she said.

"In time I could belong."

"You don't have that kind of time."

She was merely bucking the Bellini project. He fell to thinking of the beautiful frame on the picture. If you were passing off a fake, you'd get a frame like that.

In the morning Burgo hurried to the dealer's shop. Now in the full daylight the softly mature Madonna looked at her son and, holding her hand a little way up and over him, she quieted someone—one of the two with her, possibly. A man and a woman, two saints no doubt, were with her. The robes were richly colored and painted in Bellini's dramatic way with folds and lights. There was a country scene in the background, part of it hilly, with a glowing building with towers and battlements, and part of it lowlands, with a tiller of the soil, some oxen, trees. It was a late work of Bellini without the outlined contours that were a part of his early work, one of those Renaissance paintings which render the details of skin, hair, cloth and grass in such a way as to glorify God. The figures were a crystallized essence of themselves and the painter's faith.

The moments of gazing were enough to make Burgo think of Bellini's luck. What certitudes were then in their prime! Here was a painter who never had read "In Memoriam," had never been told that there is more faith in honest doubt, believe me, than in half your creeds. For Bellini, how the willing times matched the talent! In his lifetime and all the way to Rembrandt, there was no outcast painter. Artists were high in the pecking order. Burgo thought, "My God! Is this envy?" No, in a way, he guessed it was more like a prayer for himself.

But there was something wrong with the clouds. Burgo left

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the shop and went to the Uffizi Gallery. He studied the two Bellinis that were hung. He looked up his Bellini, but it was not described. Of course this was not against its genuineness. There were some Bellini drawings, and he put in a request for them. They would be available to him for the next day. He settled down to seek discoverable quirks, to see if a fingernail or a fold revealed the master, or if there were any clichés in the creating of depth in a face.

After he had absorbed these paintings which Bellini was known to have made, he went back to the dealer's shop. He did not see the painting and hardly knew why it should have been moved. The dealer came to him and showed him the signed note acknowledging the owner's debt and therefore authorizing the sale of the picture at the end of the agreed period.

"You see I am keeping the woman's painting safe," he said. "It is upstairs now."

"May I see it?" Burgo asked.

"Why, yes."

There was just one small window to light the loft. Burgo had to resort to matches again. He lit one and looked all over his painting, as he used to study Nina's face when they met as young lovers. The clouds? He could not tell. Among Bellini's many students, some might have been asked to finish the sky. It was commonly done, just as a great surgeon might have a young M.D. do the final stitches.

He went out of the shop and bought a flashlight. He also bought a book on Bellini with lovely plates which would help him when he could not get at the paintings. Bellini lived his long life in Venice. But how could they go to Venice now? They had been reserving Venice for the spring.

He could go to Milan. There were fine Bellinis at the Museum attached to the Brera Academy. He had to study them.

He went back to the shop, and with his flashlight he sat down on the floor of the loft in the cold and the dimness and turned on his light. Now more than before it was like a meeting with his beloved. He looked and looked, he filled his eyes with look-

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ing and could not get enough. It was a beautiful picture and he wanted it, although he was becoming aware of a suspicious blemish. He admitted to himself that the leaves were blurry. Could Bellini have painted blurry leaves?

After a few days of working with Bellini designs at the Uffizi and checking again and again in the dealer's loft, Burgo left his family and went to Milan. Milan was cold also, warmer outside than in the buildings. When he sickened of study, he had coffee with a fellow American who was living there.

"It's very cold again today," he said, over an espresso, to his friend, during one of these coffee breaks.

"Terrifically," his friend said. He, too, was on a grant for the year. "How's it going?" The friend was in on Burgo's project.

"All right," said Burgo. "Sure, I've found blurry leaves."

There was always the possibility of Bellini's students and how much use he made of them, and of his own range, and of his immensely long life. "Although it's not usual," Burgo went on. "He usually paints leaves, twigs, curls, vestments, and a hunting party far away or a group of masquers on the castle lawn, with great pains."

"Well, Burgo, there are a lot of Bellinis in Italy, all over, you might say. But nobody owns one. It's worth the risk you'd be running, maybe. I'd take it. Only you won't want to sell it after you smuggle it out."

"I've not had time to worry about that yet."

As he walked back to the Brera Museum, Burgo contrived an imaginary meeting of bureaucrats. It was like a play by Elmer Rice or Clifford Odets, with a minimum of scenery and the maximum of message. The bureaucrats were studying his Bellini and himself. He had already bought the painting and had declared it, as he would have to do, to the officials at the Uffizi, and had listed it as an old picture which he had picked up. In a blast of gesture and screaming talk, they found it a genuine Bellini and swore to have him ruined, for either he should have seen this for himself as an established artist, or he had indeed seen it and was trying to cheat. What a way to establish the

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painting's genuineness. And what a way to live, he suddenly thought. Not merely the feeling of wrongdoing, but the dullness of his daydreams was displeasing.

Not declaring the painting would also be terrifying and would involve as great a risk. Could it be attached to the bottom of a car somehow? Not that they had a car, but friends did. Could it be taken out of the frame and put in a trunk with clothes? The frame could go out of the country easily because it was antique but not a state treasure. Probably the painting was about three feet by three and one-half feet.

Inside the Museum, Burgo really finished with his study. He wrapped it all up. The looking was idle now. He saw the circular and vertical strokes on the trees. In the "Pietà with St. John," he saw the depth in the faces, the chins, the noses, the eyes. The artist got depth by cross hatching, nobby noses, cleft chins, and yet that was not all. These matters, and clichés of fabric or of skin or of leaves, were not the crucial matters.

What was crucial was the poetry of statement. The smoothness of Bellini's glazes, the way they go on, that could all be imitated, but not the overall wholeness. It is what cannot be imitated in any work, a Van Gogh, Rembrandt, or Goya, or Delacroix. And this essence of essence—his Bellini had it!

He returned to Florence, a man who wanted to put argument behind him. "So, Nina, I'm going there first thing in the morning, and I'm going to wire my brother for the money."

"All right. And then you'll be able to get back to work. We can postpone cutting it up and mailing it out of the country." She was full of fury. "Why has the dealer been so easy to find, ever since you got interested in the picture?"

"I don't know," Burgo said irritably, responding quickly to the cold fury in Nina. "I don't think that he has tried to sell the painting at all. He really tries to interest me in his furniture."

"I remember how lovely the furniture was."

"As to my getting back to work, that is strictly up to me. I suppose you would refuse a fortune and security for your children?"

"But Burgo," she said, more gravely, "you have always de-

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fended this on worldly grounds. I thought we were committed to Olympian heights."

"I am not confused, so why should you be?"

"I am not confused, either. I know that it is not part of your intent as an artist, and that is what I don't like."

Burgo's smile was as to a misinformed child. "You're not the custodian of my intent. I am a dogma unto myself. It is enough that I should know what is there, in the inner me."

"But this time you are just like some new rich man who orders an abbey for his orchard."

"This time?" Burgo asked. He stared heavenwards, looking like Gino. "Maybe this is a female secondary sex characteristic." He could never make clear to her that his art, work, talents, this inner part which was himself—yes, the inimitable, like the inner essence in his Bellini—was not in her care, was not even at stake whether he bought a painting and smuggled it home, or slept with his secretary, or cheated at cards, hit a man when he was down, stole produce from the widow's corner store, or gave sermons as the leading layman in the church back home. This part of him was in his own care and did indeed count—it was all that counted. He would use the brutality in him to protect this part, and he always had. It was quite unimpaired. She might be right about just anything else, that he couldn't ever fit in here, that he was ruder than the people he hadn't liked at Gino's, that John wasn't doing his school work, that the dealer had lovely furniture, that his mother was bossy. . . .

Burgo felt that Florence, too, was a yammering woman. He looked at the statues on the bridge, on his way to the dealer's the next morning. Every work of art had always been (at its very least, oh God) a parable of work done against all odds, visitors, telephones, pain, all the non-creative ideas that are the artist's unwanted gnats, sometimes got up like butterflies. Now the statues on the Ponte Vecchio did not speak of the odds. They spoke of their glorious necessity and of the blinding and ennobling might that had gone into their creation. He was filled with horror. Why had he been willing to throw away nearly a month?

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He turned into the street he knew so well and which knew him so well. He felt that the people who were on the doorsteps were smiling upon him. He suddenly figured his fortune anew if it were a Bellini and if the delicate problem of persuading a few key experts were solved and if he were able to part with it after all—and in this agreeable trance, he returned the smiles of the people on the street as he passed them.

The shop door was open but the dealer was not in sight. Burgo dashed up to the loft. He had not seen his painting for many days. It was not there by the little round window. The dealer had moved it again. He looked around in the loft and could not find it. It must be downstairs. He raced down. In a quick search he did not see the painting. This proved nothing. The place was full of junk.

The dealer came in and spoke a good morning. "I saw you come in," he said.

"I see that you have moved the painting again."

"The lady came for it this morning. I was helping her put it in the car."

To his surprise Burgo burst into tears. Owner and picture were gone. He heard the dealer ask him to bring his wife to look at the furniture. See? What the dealer wanted them to see was his furniture. The dealer patted Burgo's shoulder. He grinned at the man's amazed face—he had never in all of his business dealings come up against the likes of Burgo deBorn, and this was in his face. Burgo was bewildered too, to be standing in this old furniture store, crying over the lost picture. It was no good to have been right about the picture and to have lost it.

He went back to the studio and started the fire. The fresh wax fumes routed the staleness in the room. He looked at the "Young Boy" which was half done and he liked it. It had occurred to him, on the way to the studio, to melt it down and to smash some of the others, for the effective thing was surely something brutal. But he began to make a sketch of the dealer's face and head. It might do for the head he was planning of the man who is almost buried but who can cry out to keep people

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(like Dante, who are strolling through the Inferno) from kicking him. This was the starting point of his thought: not a free head, but one which was almost encased. Yes, in the dealer's face, you knew no large undertaking, but all of the small transactions of Florentine life were there, and as to the eventful and captured moment, in bewilderment there is no guile: the defenses of cunning are thrown down (the man who is almost buried in Hell—didn't Dante have him full of self-righteousness?). A very rough surface. . . .

He worked for a long time, made several sketches and models of face, head, encasement. When he stopped work, it was early evening and he heard someone singing.

Nina would be happy about the outcome; he needn't bring any other gift. This turn, in which she pretended to be for the inward satisfactions of his work, was not Nina. Nina used even his mistakes as a weapon. When she stood before a gallery owner and told about the Bellini they found in Florence, she would be trying to get Burgo something, or somewhere. He hoped that by that time his sadness would have melted to rue, a rueful smile, a forgotten bewilderment. She was not alone in the search for the triumphant prizes and the honorable and highly-paying grants and contests, but he was alone in knowing the inward satisfactions.

At this point he usually reflected that the lot of wives, calling for indirection and selfless effort, could be full of misery. But now he decided that, before going home, he would go by the dealer's to ask him to pose for this statue.

The shop was closed. Though he tried, and Nina tried, they never found the dealer in again.

As he worked on the statue without the model, he began to exploit a growing resemblance to his own face. Under the title "Self-Portrait" this statue was one of the first pieces to sell in his next American show, and was cited in every notice as a work which carried much, both in content and technique, that this young sculptor had learned from his sojourn in Italy.

Paul Petrie

BLACKBIRD

This bird, this long-beaked bird with shocking eye
gives wings unto my fears and makes them fly.
He sits upon my eaves-trough staring down,
as I lie looking up, and stares me down.
I snap the shade and pinch the curtains in.
He grinds his claws into the rotting tin,
glides out a serpent neck that I may see
the length of pain, the shade of obloquy.
His eye stands out like slander from his head,
a deadman's eye, fixed upon the dead.

He nests above our closet, and at night
I hear him scratching blindly for the light,
and pecking at the cardboard slabs that hold
the realms of darkness from the realms of gold.

He pecks into my dreams. When on the stairs
I stand in groups of terror, and my ears
pound with the giant steps of guilt and pain,
that blackbird's cry divides my shrinking brain.
And falling down into the endless pit,
his wings consume the sky and swallow it.

Grackle, you are not wise. This house is black
beyond all hope of ever turning back.
There is no way, once in, by claw or wing
to that old eden world where blackbirds sing.
And perched above my bed, my bust of fear,
your screams of pain may be too much to bear.

Morgan Gibson

DUSK ON SCOLLAY SQUARE

Who's tripping over bottles in the hall?
What son of a bitch is hammering the door?
Perhaps a Cabot or a Saltonstall.
No, it's bashful Herman and a whore.

He wants the bed. I do not smash his jaw,
knowing that sex for him is touch and go.
Mutilated as the moral law
she's busy before the mirror. So I go,

tripping over bottles in the hall
and over bones and tin-cans in the yard
and notice morning-glories fade and fall
and try to think of Keats and Abelard.

John Tagliabue

Whichever way you look at it

A		
man		
who	pushing	
doesn't	his	
eat	way	
much	through	
but	the	space
heavenly	tangled	wandering
rice	dim	this
is	thick	way
standing	busy	towards
in	weeds	heaven.
a	is	
long	in	
thin	this	
boat	scene	
in	of	
dim	mostly	
blue	dim	
with	and	
a	white	
long		
pole		
and		
strong		

Not a philosophic "problem" but a
procreative pleasure

The
moon
made
a
fish
lay
an
egg
countless
too
but
I
will
say
one
that
becomes
One
and
made
a
fish
squirt
a
sperm
countless
too
but
I
will
say
Many

and
the
fish
or
you
that
was
born
like
music
everywhere
was
one-
and-
many.

Joseph H. Summers

The Achievement of Edwin Muir

WITH THE PUBLICATION of Edwin Muir's *Collected Poems* (1952), his *Autobiography* (1954), and *One Foot in Eden* (1956), many readers made the disconcerting discovery that someone had been writing important poetry and prose for a number of years without their attention or help. Despite all the praise that those volumes have received, many of Muir's new admirers have still not fully recognized the range of his achievement. Born in 1887, Muir published his first volume of prose in 1918 and his last volume of poetry in 1956. At the time of his death in 1959, he was still writing new poems and working on a book on the Scottish ballads. He published seven volumes of literary and social criticism (including one volume disguised as a travel journal), three novels, two volumes of autobiography, a biography, ten volumes of poetry, and innumerable reviews and essays. There was also a period when Muir and his wife, Willa Muir, "turned [themselves] into a sort of translation factory" and produced among other works (by Hauptmann and Broch, for example) those translations of Kafka which are in themselves works of art.

The *Autobiography* provides the best introduction to Muir's work. When he published the first part of it in 1940, Muir explained the reason for its title, *The Story and the Fable*:

It is clear that no autobiography can begin with a man's birth, that we extend far beyond any boundary line which we can set for ourselves in the past or the future, and that the life of every man is an endlessly repeated performance of the life of man. It is clear for the same reason that no autobiography can confine itself to conscious life, and that sleep, in which we pass a third of our existence, is a mode of experience, and our dreams a part of reality. In themselves our conscious lives may not

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be particularly interesting. But what we are not and can never be, our fable seems to me inconceivably interesting. I should like to write that fable, but I cannot even live it; and all I could do if I related the outward course of my life would be to show how I have deviated from it; though even that is impossible, since I do not know the fable or anybody who knows it. One or two stages in it I can recognize: the age of innocence and the Fall and all the dramatic consequences which issue from the Fall. But these lie behind experience, not on its surface; they are not historical events; they are stages in the fable.

Muir came as near to writing that "impossible" autobiography as anyone I know. It is a beautiful book. In its detailed accounts of the most important events of his life, both sleeping and waking, one can recognize the sources of some of the most moving passages in his poetry and fiction.

The *Autobiography* also dramatizes the relation of Muir's "story" to the smaller "fable" of the modern western artist. The "mythical" life of most of the significant twentieth-century artists seems to include alienation and despair—or nausea. They have been exiles from any homeland, wandering in a hostile realm, and they have often produced their most moving works from the very heart of that experience. They have been haunted by time. Muir, too, experienced alienation, despair and nausea. As an Orkneyman in Glasgow, London, Prague, Dresden and Rome, as a Scotsman writing in English, as an "English writer" translating continental literature, he was always an exile or an alien. Time was one of his major themes. But Muir's time was not congruent with the time of upper middle-class civilization in England and America. His experience of the modern trauma was largely completed before 1921. Most of his writing came after; it reflects a life in the process of recreation rather than of disintegration. And Muir's life before the trauma was also not the characteristic modern one, for it began with fourteen years in a pre-industrial society and landscape, an Orkney in "pre-history" where a child could experience an "age of innocence," a natural vision of life and death. Muir seemed to have lived a longer span of the world's history than is generally given to any mortal.

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When his father moved the family to hideously industrialized Glasgow, Muir descended into the modern hell:

... like everybody else I stubbornly set myself not to see what was before my eyes every day. This in time produced a sense of inward squalor, the reflection of the outward misery that I pushed away from me; and finally I reached a stage where I almost ignored my surroundings, lost the natural delight in my eyes which I had once had, and shielded my senses by shutting them off from what perpetually violated them.

Within a few years his parents and two of his brothers were dead: "I was too young for so much death." With fantastic jobs in a beer-bottling factory and a "bone factory," meaningless love affairs, and his fierce attempts to educate himself (he attended concerts because Nietzsche approved of them), Muir experienced concomitantly his intellectual, social and psychological crises. He was led in dreams and visions to the brink of sanity.

We Moderns is our chief contemporary witness to the crises. A collection of short notes and a few satirical verses which had appeared in *The New Age*, it was published in 1918:

In these notes I generalized in excited ignorance on creative love and the difference between it and pity, which I unhesitatingly condemned; I pointed out such facts as that humility is really inverted pride, and that the true antithesis of love is not hate but sympathy: whenever I hit upon a paradox which lay conveniently near the surface I took it for the final truth.

It is a painful book, and it is difficult to believe that the same man could have written it, with its rash of exclamation points and Germanicized abstract nouns, and some of the essays which appeared six years later. One can glimpse the idealism underneath the fury, and there are bits of interesting judgment; but the shrill affirmations betray the suffering and insecurity which produced this desperate act of will.

"I lived for most of these years in a sort of submarine world of glassy lights and distorted shapes, enclosed in a diver's bell which had grown to my shoulders." *The Marionette* (1927), the novel about the "idiot" Hans, shows the mode of such

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perception and, partially, the process of a returning recognition of the external world. David's climactic meditation in *The Three Brothers* (a novel set in the period of the Scottish Reformation which Muir published in 1931) is one of the most moving realizations of despair which I know. But Muir could have written that passage, with all its personal echoes, only after the experience itself was past and could be seen. The story of Muir's rediscovery of the will to live is largely the story of his marriage to Willa Muir, his psychoanalysis in London in 1920 and 1921, and his discovery of beauty in Czechoslovakia and Germany in the 'twenties. Those events were associated with the rediscovery of his childhood world in the Orkneys, the events and images which, refined through dreams, represented his essential values.

Muir's later intellectual and literary development was remarkably independent. He rejected the program of the Scottish nationalists. He believed that the fragmentation of Scottish life had anticipated the fragmentation of modern life in general by a number of centuries ("the centre has not held in Scotland for four hundred years"); Scots had ceased to be the language of serious thought for so long that Muir believed any attempt to revive it as a literary language must fail. (He rejected from his *Collected Poems* all of his early poems in Scots, including the delightful "Ballad of the Flood.") After his early intoxication with Nietzsche, there was a time in the 'twenties when he thought Freud "seemed to provide an explanation for all experience"; and in the 'thirties he published an interesting pamphlet, *Social Credit and the Labour Party: An Appeal*, which indicated his individual allegiance to both those movements. But his theoretical enthusiasms did not have much effect on either his poetry or his criticism; and in his associations with fashionable intellectual movements, he was oddly unfashionable. He was never, for example, "properly" apologetic for the lack of "realism" in his early advocacy of Fabian socialism: he neither tried to make his position look realistic nor did he indicate that he had changed his mind particularly. What he learned from Freud did not resemble what most intellectuals

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learn from Freud. And in our days of dramatic conversions and dogmatic positions, it is almost shocking to read Muir's simple account of how, on the night of February 28, 1939, he discovered while taking off his waistcoat that he had been a Christian for some time without knowing it. Muir decided to join no church, and he confined the prose statement of his experience to one diary entry and a few paragraphs of the *Autobiography*.

Muir never truly belonged to a group or a "movement." For a critic and a poet in our age, such independence provided, in compensation for a certain loneliness, unexpected advantages.

As a critic, Muir combined the usually disparate functions of the reviewer for the press, the historical critic, and the critic concerned with fundamental principles. He was interested in fiction as well as poetry, and in works of all periods. He had a wider acquaintance with German and Slavic literatures (and probably less familiarity with Romance literature) than is customary today. He was not at all afraid that he might commit himself unquestionably in favor of a work which impressed no one else or might damn a work which others loved. He accepted naturally the critic's duty to define limitations as well as virtues, but he resisted the temptation to demand one kind of literary effect from all works. He was not pompous and he was not dull. His writing is always clear.

Muir's first significant volume of criticism was *Latitudes* (1924), which concerned Burns, Scottish ballads, Conrad, Dostoevsky, Ibsen, Nietzsche, and various general topics. *Transition: Essays on Contemporary Literature* (1926) contained individual essays on Joyce, Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, Stephen Hudson, Huxley, Strachey, Eliot, Edith Sitwell and Robert Graves. *The Structure of the Novel* (1928), his best known volume in America, was followed by *Scott and Scotland: The Predicament of the Scottish Writer* (1936). *The Present Age: From 1914* was designed as the fifth volume of Bonamy Dobrée's *Introductions to English Literature*. It had the immediate misfortune of publication in the year 1939, when the "present" suddenly became the past, and it was largely ignored. It is a substantial work, and today the period 1914-1939 seems to

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provide a fortuitous unit with more reality for literature than any other we have yet discovered in the twentieth century. The most important critical volume was *Essays on Literature and Society*, published in 1949.

Such a body of criticism over such a period of time inevitably recalls Eliot. But in his comments on Eliot in *Transition*, Muir made clear some of the essential differences. He began with a simple acknowledgement of Eliot's importance: "There is probably no writer of our time who has said more things about the art of literature which are at once new and incontrovertible than Mr. T. S. Eliot." He went on to describe Eliot's virtues, including by the way one of those simple, illuminating sentences which are a hallmark of Muir's criticism: "His critical method consists in pressing a small lever and in thereby releasing an unsuspectedly heavy weight." It was when he turned to Eliot's attitude toward "tradition" that Muir's independence emerged. He admired the central formulation in "Tradition and the Individual Talent":

Admirable and profound words—yet why is it that in spite of them Mr. Eliot always appears to us to underestimate the free character of tradition, the fact that in its living perpetuation it gives the artist his proper liberty, and is not so much a thing to be submitted to or imposed as to be discovered and welcomed? The influence of tradition on Mr. Eliot's criticism is not to make it uniformly bold and comprehensive, but more generally to make it cautious. He often draws back where a genuinely classical writer, a writer in the full stream of tradition, knowing the dangers, seeing the raised eyebrows of all the past and hearing the warnings of the present, would have gone on. Mr. Eliot feels answerable to tradition for every judgment he makes: but this accepted responsibility, while it gives his criticism weight, sometimes makes it curiously timid. Thus, if his enthusiasms are never wild, his understatement sometimes are. One is struck by the sheer oddity when he describes Goethe's *Faust* as "a very able and brilliant poem," and when, admitting that a few "many sided" men must "probably" be conceded to history, he adds: "Perhaps Leonardo da Vinci is such." It is as easy to lose one's sense of proportion through excessive caution as through excessive rashness.

In *The Present Age*, Muir made his major criticism explicit:

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"In Eliot we cannot but be conscious of a deep mistrust of liberty." After quoting the formulation in *After Strange Gods* about the "homogeneous" population desired in the Christian society, Muir remarked simply, "These are his requirements for a healthy traditional society; but the tradition is not the English one."

The differences between Muir's and Eliot's "traditions" are more than matters of literary taste: they imply a difference in attitude toward human experience and ultimate value. Muir was harshest and clearest when he described T. E. Hulme's use of the conception of Original Sin:

Behind all Hulme's literary criticism was the dogma of Original Sin. Though it was not new, he succeeded in making a scoop of it and set it out in headlines. He was not quite disinterested, that is to say, in his employment of it; to him it was a convenient rejoinder to the romantics. All his public statements implied an invisible contemporary opponent; and he had in an exaggerated form the snobbery which consists in saying today what a good number of people will be saying tomorrow. He insisted therefore on the irreconcilable aspect of any truth; and to give Original Sin a sensational value, he calmly ignored the complementary hypothesis of redemption. He looked on attentively while man fell, and turned his eyes away while man picked himself up again, or was picked up. . . . he says: "As man is essentially bad, he can only accomplish anything of value by discipline—ethical and political." This is neither the religious nor the humanist point of view; in saying that man can accomplish anything of value *only* by discipline, Hulme would have had neither Aquinas nor Luther nor Calvin to support him, for he allowed nothing for Grace. The first part of his thesis, that man is essentially bad, is religious, though wrongly stated; the second part, that man can accomplish anything of value only by discipline is purely secular: it is the worldly philosophy of the dictator and of the realistic practical man in general.

"Eliot is a far more balanced and substantial critic than Hulme, and far less under the influence of mere reaction." But that part of Eliot's "tradition" which derives from or resembles Hulme's, Muir opposed with "the English tradition, especially on its heretical libertarian side," which he then felt was exemplified in the criticism of Herbert Read:

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From Original Sin one may draw either the conclusion that man must be supervised into salvation, or the conclusion that man must be given the freedom to work out his salvation. The difference is roughly the difference between Catholicism and Protestantism; and on the plane of criticism it is roughly the difference between Eliot and Read.

I should tend to substitute the name of Muir himself for that of Read.

The figures whom Muir considered, each with some admiration, in *Literature and Society*, indicate how wide and how individual his own literary tradition was: Robert Henryson, Chapman, Shakespeare, Sterne, Burns, Scott, Browning, Hardy, Hölderlin and Kafka. The list is by no means exhaustive (surely Wordsworth and Hugo von Hofmannsthal must be included among those who seriously influenced Muir), but how oddly unfashionable it sounds! What possibly can such a random group of writers have in common? And how could one man "seriously" like them all?

The degrees of liking differed, and with some of these figures Muir had decided reservations (Chapman, Scott, Browning and Hardy, for example). Yet when one reads the essays carefully, particularly with some memory of Muir's poetry and of his other prose, one discovers that there is a thread of "tradition" which unites them. It is a very simple quality: each of these writers possessed an individual vision, in some sense unique, of the human condition; and each achieved a form either by inheritance or discovery or invention, which gives body to that vision and makes it communicable. Muir's tradition cannot be divorced from the individuals (or perhaps the visions) which compose it: it is always open to expansion. It includes, with almost equal facility, the comic and the humorous, as well as the tragic and the ironic, and it excludes no major writer. Most radically of all, it places technical dexterity firmly in a subordinate position to primary vision. It is the latter fact which makes possible such an unusual judgment today as Muir's remark, "Ingenuity was Rilke's besetting sin."

The test of a critic, of course, is how much illumination he furnishes us. Muir had a gift for "simple" and memorable

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formulations which, often in a sentence, cast new light on figures and issues—and often destroyed, almost casually, reams of obscurantist commentary. Our impression of Muir's essays is so predominantly one of "justness" that we may not remember how much wit is involved, yet it was Muir who remarked of the "morality" in Auden's early poems, "It suggests a crowd so eager to be a team that every member is busy pulling up his neighbour's socks and has no time to attend to his own." One could construct a small anthology of such remarks: "Mr. Empson's poetry is obscure, intelligent and intricate, and contains some beautiful lines and various kinds of ambiguity." "To Galsworthy the poor were a middle-class problem." "Hardy takes a short cut to tragedy by reducing life to a formula. He gets rid beforehand of the main obstacle to tragedy, which is man's natural inclination to avoid it." "The incompatibility between the natural man and his political aims makes Mr. Hemingway's later works sentimental in a curious way; it is as if we saw Caliban looking through the eyes of Prospero, and, without Prospero's rod, swearing to perform Prospero's miracle with his naked fist." Or on the early Aldous Huxley: "Because people are one thing and appear another, as they have always done and for their self-preservation must always do, he is enraged. . . . He has the moral rage, without the morality, of a satirist; and although the effect is unintentional, sometimes he gives the impression of sitting on the fence, of a little irresolutely trying to make the worst of both worlds."

Yet such a series of quotations may give the wrong impression, for Muir's criticism did not depend upon the wisecrack, and it was more often appreciative than destructive. The chief distinction of the individual essays derives from the fact that each presents a clear account of a writer's work, seen both in its historical situation and in an unhistorical, "absolute" context of human and aesthetic value. One may disagree with details or even with the entire judgment (I happen to believe that in his published writings Muir showed misunderstanding of Swift and a failure to respond to much of Yeats), yet one never doubts the value of the sane, double vision; it presents the issues

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clearly, the issues with which we ourselves must come to terms if we wish to make a different or a "better" judgment. In 1939, for example, Muir remarked that Pound's best poetry is the "comment of a craftsman," that his virtues were largely medieval virtues, similar to Dunbar's. But this, for Muir, did not automatically guarantee Pound's stature as a major literary figure: "Pound is the archetypal poet, or the mere poet, who rises to greatness in an age of faith when men's conception of life is given to them complete, objectively, and all that the poet has to do is to say it out. But in a sceptical age where the poet has both to shape his conception of life and say it out, these virtues cannot come to fulfilment; they fight against the times and the times against them."

Much of Muir's criticism might be dismissed in a technological age as "moral" rather than "literary," but I believe that one of his most exciting gifts was the ability to show precisely those situations in which the moral sphere impinges directly on the literary. In his essay on Spengler, for example, Muir remarked, "The essential thing here is Spengler's inflection, not what he says"; he then defined the "pseudo-man of action," a moral type which has become increasingly familiar since the nineteenth century:

Many people before him have held that man is a beast of prey; Hobbes did so. But he did not think it was a noble or edifying fact; he did not romantically exalt the lion, the tiger and the shark, and exhort men to become like them. . . . The pseudo-man of action alone romanticises brutality in this way, and by the pseudo-man of action I do not mean the man who, but for physical or other incidental defect, might have become a great figure in history, but the man who lives in a dream of action, imagining that by the ardour of his dreams he influences events. Carlyle behaves in this way when he exhorts Cromwell at the critical point of battles, forgetting that his exhortations come two centuries too late; Nietzsche, when he constitutes himself the official midwife of a Superman who is never born; and Spengler, when he implies that in writing about history he is in some way making it. A man who is not framed for action will commit the most shocking errors in writing about it and violate the moral sense of ordinary people without being in the least conscious that he is doing so.

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The moral and aesthetic grounds for Muir's rejection of Communism were one:

Communism presented itself as a strange, solidly made object, very like a huge clock, with metal bowels, no feelings, and no explanation for itself but its own impenetrable mechanism; it was neither glad nor sad, and revered only its own guaranteed working. . . . To forgive an enemy was a sin against the system; to forgive an erring brother was reprehensible weakness. I tried to think of ordinary people, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers and children, lovers and friends and to imagine them all as unforgiving and unforgiven, on principle and not merely by inclination; and I realized that it was impossible to wish this and to understand mankind. To think in such ways either kills or falsifies the imagination.

What Muir opposed is clear: any system which stultifies the imagination, which does not leave a place for the recognition of individual experience and individual vision as the primary values. It is this principle which made coherent his attacks on Communism and fascism, on the "religion" of T. E. Hulme and the newer "naturalism" of a host of writers, on an "historical sense" which reduces literature and life itself to mere records of mechanized or casual "responses," and on a relativism by which "it is possible to prefer anything to anything else: a well-grown tiger to Socrates or Christ, brutality to kindness, cunning to honesty, treachery to good faith." This principle underlies his attacks on criticism which demands or values only one type of "psychology" or attitude, that which confuses ingenuity with profundity, and that which values works solely on the bases of historical or political considerations.

In literature, however, the force which Muir most consistently and valiantly attacked is the force of fashion. Fashion has the power to reduce, to falsify, to vulgarize almost any individual vision: Wordsworth probably furnished Muir's prime example. It was this perception which made Muir write, "In the modern world the power most solidly obnoxious to the artist is not the public but the intelligentsia."

In his early appreciations of Joyce, Lawrence and Kafka, Muir was presenting his individual discoveries, not following fashion. His admiration was based largely on the belief that

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these men had avoided "being assimilated by the age." They were opposed at every instance to the fashionable writers, the majority of writers:

The majority of writers accept fashion blindly, never feel the abnormal need to question, are either satisfied with things as they seem, or else are content with a mood of wonder which cannot goad them beyond itself . . . they may have a regard for art; they are sometimes within their limitations sincere; but their decisive limitation is that they speak out of the *Zeit Geist* as if they were speaking in their sleep. . . . They are mere expressions of the thing of which as artists they should be the contemplators. If they have enthusiasm it is not their enthusiasm, if disillusion, not their disillusion, if thoughts, not their thoughts. They are manifestations of a literary fashion, and it is in the essential nature of fashion to blind us to its meaning and the causes from which it springs; to everything, in fact, except the inevitability of the conformity it demands.

There are two ways in which the writer may avoid being assimilated by the age; one is by struggling with it, the other is by escape. Both imply an intense apprehension of the spirit of the age, and both are in greater or less measure salutary.

In 1926, Muir identified Aldous Huxley as "our best example of the fashionable writer," Joyce as that "of the artist expressing the age by an uncompromising opposition to it," Lawrence as "the grand example in our age of the poet of escape." To oppose fashion, the writer must have a vision of himself and his age and the "normal" life of man. Muir takes us back almost to Milton: the significant writer must be a man of significant vision; the great writer, the man of great vision.

In his thirty-fifth year when he was living in Germany, Muir began to write poetry. I doubt that any other living poet began in such a fashion:

I had no training; I was too old to submit myself to contemporary influences; and I had acquired in Scotland a deference towards ideas which made my entrance into poetry difficult. Though my imagination had begun to work I had no technique by which I could give expression to it. There were the rhythms of English poetry on the one hand, the images in my mind on the other. All I could do at the start was to force the one, creaking and complaining, into the mould of the other

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.... I began to write poetry simply because what I wanted to say could not have gone properly into prose. I wanted so much to say it that I had no thought left to study the form in which alone it could be said.

I certainly knew far too little about myself; yet I feel now that, in spite of the troubles brought about by my ignorance, I was more fortunate than the young poet (I was not even young) who knows too much or thinks he knows too much about poetry, and solves with ease the technical problems which I could not solve at all. To think of poetry like this makes it a simple and businesslike, and may make it almost a clever thing. I wrote in baffling ignorance, blundering and perpetually making mistakes. I must have been influenced by something, since we all are, but when I try to find out what it was that influenced me, I can only think of the years of childhood which I spent on my father's farm in the little island of Wyre in Orkney, and the beauty I apprehended then, before I knew there was beauty.

Although the *Collected Poems: 1921-1951* is really a selection and contains few of the earliest poems, it shows Muir's development as a poet; it also shows that his unusual point of departure made for an unusual terminus.

One strain of modern poetry at its best has been called "dramatic," but it is often dramatic in a special sense. The poem is usually concerned not with a complete action but with a specific natural or psychological scene, the end of action or, more often, an explanation of why action is impossible; as Muir has remarked of Browning, the poet is "concerned with the *dramatis personae* rather than with the play, he set[s] himself to find out what the *dramatis personae* really thought of the play, privately." The language itself furnishes the central point of interest; the "action" of the poem is largely the action of the words upon each other. Complexity of language is essential to the life of the poem.

Muir always, however, strove for simplicity rather than complexity, for clarity rather than density of texture. He was primarily concerned with vision rather than with language. In his best poems the language comes close to that pure ideal of "translation" which Simone Weil once described in a letter to Gustave Thibon:

The effort of expression has a bearing not only on the form but on the thought and on the whole inner being. So long as bare simplicity

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of expression is not attained, the thought has not touched or even come near to true greatness. . . . The real way of writing is to write as we translate. When we translate a text written in some foreign language, we do not seek to add anything to it; on the contrary, we are scrupulously careful not to add anything to it. This is how we have to translate a text which is not written down.

Muir could use such a diction and have his poems still remain poems because his subject was also not the usual one. The poems are rarely concerned with a particular personality in a particular time and place. They are concerned with man, and the time is either all time or one of the recurrent times of man, and the place is the world, the prehistoric and the historic, this world and the next. They are saved from formlessness by the fact that Muir saw life in terms of narrative. The modes of the narrative are largely the pilgrimage, the journey of discovery, and the battle; and the living fragments of the narrative are found in dreams, in visions, in the cycles of nature and man's life, in heraldry and myth. So we have "Ballad of Hector in Hades," "Tristram's Journey," "The Enchanted Knight"; the meditations of "Oedipus," of "Moses," and of Theseus escaped from "The Labyrinth." We have the heraldry of the dragon and the sphinx, the lion, the helmet, "The Castle," "The Grove," "The Gate"; and we have continually "The Myth," "The Old Gods," "The Fall," and "The Journey Back." These themes do not, of course, guarantee the poetry. Other poets, long before Muir, have played with such material; but Muir was never trivial. He never treated the mythic as the simply historical or as the external: it reflected the poet's serious and often suffering perception of his own experience.

Muir usually chose traditional forms, each of which he used with increasing distinction: the ballad stanza, blank verse, *terza rima*, the sonnet, the simple three-stress or four-stress line in quatrains or short stanzas—with occasionally freer adaptations which indicated that his desire was not for an image of perfect symmetry. We are never at a loss to determine grammatical constructions, to identify recondite allusions, to work out the implications of verbal ambiguities, or to extricate various voices from an aural montage; and the imagery is almost never fully

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private: it is the stuff of the dreams and myths of everyman. Yet with all their simplicity and apparently "old-fashioned" conventions, the poems are anything but conventional or obvious. They are often deeply and rewardingly "obscure," with the obscurity of the dreams and myths themselves. They compel attentive meditation: with it, their relations to the timely as well as the timeless quietly expand.

The elements in the visions of Muir's poems were largely constant during the past thirty years, but their relationships changed. In the early poems time is characteristically the enemy, the destroyer rather than the partial creator of the myth. The fall of man seems in no sense happy: "Where I lie now I stood at first." Although there are earlier moments when the lost world is recaptured as a living thing, "The Letter," from *The Narrow Place*, marks a new point of vision from which time may be glimpsed as blessing as well as curse:

Tried friendship must go down perforce
Before the outward eating rage
And murderous heart of middle age,
Killing kind memory at its source,
If it were not for mortality,
The thought of that which levels all
And coldly pillows side by side
The tried friend and the too much tried.

In "The Human Fold," "There's no alternative here but love." There continue to be moments of the heraldic, timeless vision, but there is a new vision of man, often pathetic, but savoring more of nobility than of beastliness:

but here our sight is bound
By ten dull faces in a round,
Each with a made-to-measure glance
That is in misery till it's found.
Yet looking at each countenance
I read this burden in them all:
'I lean my cheek from eternity
For time to slap, for time to slap.
I gather my bones from the bottomless clay
To lay my head in the light's lap.'

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In the poems which follow, "The Recurrence" and "The Good Man in Hell" (the most Herbertian poem in modern poetry), time is again partial deliverer as well as destroyer; life is affirmed together with the dream. In "The Ring," the beasts in human form become horrors in their timelessness, "new, all new." From this point until the beautiful final poem in *Collected Poems*, the true animals are seen as part of the timeless, unchanging order, but man becomes a monster if, losing memory, he attempts to live like them in an eternal present.

Despite the preponderance of mythical poems, it is not true that Muir avoided the contemporary subject. His "Reading in Wartime" is one of the best poems in English about the last war, and his "To Ann Scott-Moncrieff" is not only a fine poem but one of the few modern personal elegies which is not actually embarrassing. Often the mythical poems are contemporary to a degree that some readers have not recognized. Their resonance derives partially from the fact that in them the images from dreams, from past literature, and from contemporary political and social experience coincide.

To give only one example, one must begin with the nightmare hallucination which Muir experienced on a tram in Glasgow one evening in 1919, when he suddenly saw all the people there—and in the world—as monstrous animals, a menagerie "living an animal life and moving towards an animal death as towards a great slaughterhouse." That moment haunted his poetry and fiction for some years. Muir's continued reading of *King Lear*, among other experiences, helped to transform that image from a general vision of humanity to a particular vision of the dehumanized, of evil. "The Politics of *King Lear*," Muir's lecture at Glasgow in 1946, provides implicitly an account of that transformation. The villains in *Lear* "are so close to the state of nature that they hardly need to reflect: what they have the power to do they claim the right to do. Or rather the power and its expression in action are almost simultaneous." These human "beasts" "are quite rational, but only on the lowest plane of reason, and they have contempt for other ways of thinking which comes from a knowledge of their own effi-

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ciency." They see other human beings and events merely as means to their own ends:

To regard things in this way is to see them in a continuous present divested of all associations, denuded of memory and the depth which memory gives to life. Goneril and Regan, even more than Edmund, exist in this shallow present, and it is to them a present in both senses of the word, a gift freely given into their hands to do with what they like. Having no memory, they have no responsibility, and no need, therefore, to treat their father differently from any other troublesome old man. This may be simply another way of saying that they are evil, for it may be that evil consists in a hiatus in the soul, a craving blank, a lack of one of the essential threads which bind experience into a coherent whole and give it a consistent meaning. The hiatus in Lear's daughters is specifically a hiatus of memory, a breach in continuity; they seem to come from nowhere and to be on the way to nowhere; they have words and acts only to meet the momentary emergency, the momentary appetite.

The innocent and the monstrous "animals" and *Lear* appear in many of the poems; by 1946, the holocaust of the political "new order" had cast upon them a general, hideous, and compelling light. All are present again in "The Usurpers," re-intensified by the "new order" which Muir had then seen in Czechoslovakia. The poem is "contemporary," but it is not propaganda. It extends to an exact and pitying vision of all men who have reached the lower limits of humanity in the heart of nihilism:

There is no answer. We do here what we will
And there is no answer. This our liberty
No one has known before, nor could have borne,
For it is rooted in this deepening silence
That is our work and has become our kingdom.
If there were an answer, how could we be free?
It was not hard to still the ancestral voices:
A careless thought, less than a thought could do it.
And the old garrulous ghosts died easily,
The friendly and unfriendly, and are not missed
That once were such proud masters. In this air
Our thoughts are deeds; we dare do all we think,

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Since there's no one to check us, here or elsewhere.
All round us stretches nothing; we move through nothing,
Nothing but nothing world without end. We are
Self-guided, self-impelled and self-sustained,
Archer and bow and burning arrow sped
On its wild flight through nothing to tumble down
At last on nothing, our home and cure for all.

One Foot in Eden, Muir's last volume of poetry, is also, I believe, his best. One feels a particular excitement and pleasure in this indication that Muir's poetic technique became consistently more flexible and skillful as his vision accreted and deepened, that he wrote his finest poetry after he was sixty years of age. In this volume he moved from the most relaxed and colloquial effects to the visionary and incantatory—often in one poem. The sonnet, "Milton," on the opening page, gives promise of the range which follows:

Milton, his face set fair for Paradise,
And knowing that he and Paradise were lost
In separate desolation, bravely crossed
Into his second night and paid his price.
There towards the end he to the dark tower came
Set square in the gate, a mass of blackened stone
Crowned with vermilion fiends like streamers blown
From a great funnel filled with roaring flame.

Shut in his darkness, these he could not see,
But heard the steely clamour known too well
On Saturday nights in every street in Hell.
Where, past the devilish din, could Paradise be?
A footstep more, and his unblinded eyes
Saw far and near the fields of Paradise.

"Milton" introduces the subjects as well as styles of the poems which make up the first half of *One Foot in Eden*. I should imagine that a large number of these poems will become well known to all readers of modern poetry: "The Animals," "Adam's Dream," "The Annunciation," "The Christmas," "The Lord," "One Foot in Eden" and "The Emblem," at the minimum. They concern largely the mythic, and they include two or three of the best frankly Christian poems which we have

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in English. The colloquial strain reaches its fullest development in "Antichrist":

When he forgives
It is for love of sin and not of the sinner. . . .

His vast indulgence is so free and ample,
You well might think it universal love.

In the visionary poems, Muir did not abandon the colloquial for any sort of "poetic diction"; the language becomes simpler than ordinary speech as it renders the emblematic scene. The emblem itself is the central metaphor, and a more sensuous or metaphorical language would only distract. Muir shaped his "plain style" to create delicately dramatic and lyrical effects, as in "Orpheus' Dream":

And she was there. The little boat,
Coasting the perilous isles of sleep,
Zones of oblivion and despair,
Stopped, for Eurydice was there.
The foundering skiff could scarcely keep
All that felicity afloat.

The sonnet "To Franz Kafka" introduces, in the second half of the book, a group of poems more individual and local in their references than most of Muir's earlier poems. "Dear Franz, sad champion of the drab / And half," contrasts both with "the authentic ones, the worst and best" and with the collective first-person of the poem, "we, the proximate damned, presumptive blest." Kafka as the triumphant witness at the Judgment is an inspiration. He

would watch the tell-tale shames drift in
(As if they were troves of treasure) not aloof,
But with a famishing passion quick to grab
Meaning, and read on all the leaves of sin
Eternity's secret script, the saving proof.

The "Effigies" which follow are five portraits of isolated souls, individuals among "the proximate damned." The first, which begins, "His glances were directive, seemed to move / Pawns

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on a secret chessboard," has the physical precision of a nightmare:

When he was dying
The pieces sauntered about the board
Like lawless vagrants, and would not be controlled.
He would whisper 'Stop,'
Starting awake, and weep to think they were free.

"Double Absence," another poem from this section of the book, is, I believe, the first of Muir's poems which concerns primarily a "real" scene, a specific time in a specific place: moonrise one evening at Newbattle Abbey (the worker's college near Edinburgh where Muir was Warden from 1950 until his Norton Professorship at Harvard, 1955-1956). It is a beautiful poem, and it may shock us with its reminder of how infrequently Muir used the scenic realism characteristic of so much of the best modern poetry. It is not that Muir disliked such poetry, with its fresh observation of physical particularities which makes us see the world as new; it is merely that for his imagination the remembered or the dreamed scene usually had a greater reality than the immediately observed one.

Throughout most of its pages, *One Foot in Eden* shows a continuation and a deepening of the former strains. In his making of memorable poems, Muir never, for long at least, was willing to settle for half a world. He was not the apostle of asceticism but of fulfillment. He desired both the mythical and the physical, the angels and the animals, "the story and the fable." "Day and Night" represents his central position:

I wrap the blanket of the night
About me, fold on fold on fold—
And remember how as a child
Lost in the newness of the light
I first discovered what is old
From the night and the soft night wind.
For in the daytime all was new,
Moving in light and in the mind
All at once, thought, shape and hue.
Extravagant novelty too wild
For the new eyes of a child.

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The night, the night alone is old
And showed me only what I knew,
Knew, yet never had been told;
A speech that from the darkness grew
Too deep for daily tongues to say,
Archaic dialogue of a few
Upon the sixth or the seventh day.
And shapes too simple for a place
In the day's shrill complexity
Came and were more natural, more
Expected than my father's face
Smiling across the open door,
More simple than the sanded floor
In unexplained simplicity.

A man now, gone with time so long—
My youth to myself grown fabulous
Like an old land's memories, a song
To trouble or to pleasure us—
I try to fit that world to this,
The hidden to the visible play,
Would have them both, would nothing miss,
Learn from the shepherd of the dark,
Here in the light, the paths to know
That thread the labyrinthine park,
And the great Roman roads that go
Striding across the untrodden day.

Muir's achievement in poetry and prose is larger than the merely literary. He did not share in the modern attempts to deify poetry, or language, or even the human imagination. Implicit in all of his works is the recognition that there are things more important than literature—life and love, the physical world, the individual spirit within its body: those things in which the religious man recognizes the immediate work of God. Muir's triumph was less in the technological realm of communication than in the vastly more difficult realm of sensitivity, perception, wisdom, the things which he communicated. It was a triumph made possible only, in the familiar paradox, by humility.

Kate Brackett

COLD

Flight from my daggered enemy the cold
halts in mid-anguish at the fountain. Frozen!
The dance, the dive, the whispering, chuckling, stilled;
one blowing moment its own moonstone prison.
Who saw the invisible strike? Saw the streamers glassed,
veils arching to caves of pearl in the spasm of capture?
Bronze babies' dimples and ringlets presto cased
in ramps and palisades of the north wind's sculpture?

We too are prey, all tender flesh that lives.
Ache, ache for the men who fly, drive, sail sea-frosted
(sheathed, oh in colder cold by greener waves,
their brittle beards and jeweled hair encrusted.)
We soft, whom this old enemy can rout,
we soft must bless all heroes, yield all glory
for a warm windless place to nurture a thought;
for rest from running; for a child asleep, unwary.

Vern Rutsala

THE FUNERAL

Scarcely touching silence
the usher whispered
as he passed among us
dispensing sympathy
even though his feet
were lost, contributed
by his ankles
to the carpet's depth.

But we shuffled
as if on skis
across that waste of rug,
unsure of where death
lay, in which corner
he would be propped,
smiling as he
shopped among us.

The rooms wore mutes;
hushed insects moved
on padded feet;
curtains, like towels,
absorbed each sound
that overflowed the rug.

And we thought
the silence must be
for someone asleep—

exhausted after a long
trip, fitfully near
the edge of waking.

Then the walls
grew tongues and music
sprouted, too near,
and in light bleeding
through stained glass
we saw an effigy
of the person
who had died for us
by telegram.

APPORTIONING A DAY OF LEISURE: TIME CHART

1.

Wheeled efficiency roams the street
and here, behind doors
like shut safes, we try to mimic it,
hoarding the currency of ourselves
and of the time that stumbles in our veins.

What should be done? Donate
a sentimental hour to the yard
watching squirrels imitate our desires
by making silos of the trees?
Or perhaps we should rearrange our books

placing them once again according to
size and publisher. Then, there is always
argument to ignite morsels of our time
until exhaustion orders us to bed.
(Perhaps two hours for argument.)

Meditation, too, is legitimate. We try
it in darkened rooms until the past,
approaching on moccasins of guilt,
attacks with bits of our broken words.
They spot the darkness. (Ten minutes.)

2.

The day is a meal that must be
consumed. In the morning we can read
papers for an hour and learn of lives
where collars never fray and silver
never tarnishes; or of some neighbor

become the victim of a gas main,
blown far beyond his church. But afternoon
yawns ahead. Should we walk measuring
the weather? Should we lie in wait
for evenings flickering with movies?

Oh hell, the hours spill about us
waiting to be filled. Their only shape
is on our watches where they lie nailed.
But they open and we enter
wondering how much time should be

devoted to our time charts.
But the day is like a system of halls
angled with mirrors where our acts
echo with the indecision of limping steps
or like hours lie nailed to the clocks.

ISLAND

A PLAY WITH MUSIC



BY OSCAR MANDEL

MR
MCMLXI

ISLAND

Cast. *Heracles, Odysseus, Philoctetes, Demodocus, Medon, Guards, Chorus of Ten Soldiers (the First Soldier is the Corypheus).*

Scene. *The island of Lemnos; the cave of Philoctetes and the area surrounding it.*

PROLOGUE *with drum*

HERACLES. I am Heracles, once a man, a hero, invincible. I sacked Troy before Agamemnon was inspired to try again; but I singlehanded, he with ten thousand soldiers. I died, and, as was my due, became a god; and my word as god is my word when I was man: War!

And this is the island of Lemnos: long uninhabited, always rugged, a bed for inhuman nature, sunned and winded in silence, except for the stumble of the Aegean against its flanks, and the sighing of the trees with the hooting of shy animals.

But now two aliens live here: Philoctetes and his companion Medon. Ten years this cave has been their house. Philoctetes: the same who stood twenty years ago at my side on Mount Oeta, where I died, and who kindled the flame of my pyre, and ever since like a smoke I have concealed him from death, the bitterness to mortals.

And ten years are gone since Agamemnon, tall, hard king of Argos, gathered the nations of Greece and sailed for Troy. But Troy stands. Achilles is dead. Menelaus summers in Sparta among his women. Diomedes throws spears at water-rats. Agamemnon scratches his elbow. Ajax plays chess. Half the army has buried the other half. The living half crumbles. Already the sand is eroding the names on the epitaphs. There was a plague a year ago. And Troy stands. Its wall runs like a sneer. Nevertheless I say the end is near.

Ten years ago Philoctetes, the most skillful of the Greeks, sailed with seven ships from Malis, his home, in alliance with Agamemnon. His father, the king of Malis, gave the order. Philoctetes, a prince of resources; explorer of the Danubian and the Scythian wildernesses; mathematician; builder of aqueducts and baths and harbors and war machines. Ten years ago he led his soldiers and seamen and found Agamemnon at Aulis. Those were the days of trumpets! But at the island of Chryse they stopped, landed, midway to Troy, to sacrifice at the altar of the nymph of the island; and there—was it Hera, my old enemy, who wanted to spite my friend?—there a viper bit Philoctetes through the ankle. The wound stank in the air and he screamed.

The Greeks gathered round. In vain Machaon the son of immortal Asclepius applied balms and unguents. In vain: the wound festered. No man could endure the stench. The oracle was consulted, and spoke through Calchas: "Let Philoctetes be divided divided divided from the Greeks." Philoctetes fell to the ground like a dead man. The sacrifice to Chryse was stopped: polluted by the presence of this divided, excluded, malodorous man. Odysseus, the other Greeks consenting, lifted Philoctetes into his ship, stopping his nostrils with a cloth, rowed him here to Lemnos, and left him with Medon and gear enough to survive, perhaps. Poor man. He opened his eyes, wept. The years passed.

This cave houses him. He dug wells and made pulleys; he devised a calendar; he found an earth at the bottom of a pit which stills the worst pain of his wound; he culled fruit from the trees; he curved a bridge across a stream; and he made a bow of cornel wood so strong, so far-shooting that the possession of it will end the Trojan war. Such is the will of the gods.

I call up War! Philoctetes, up now, unite with your brothers. On the plains of Ilium the son of Achilles, beautiful and brutal Pyrrhus, waits for you. His the hand that cracks the city open, his the fire that guts old Priam and the Trojan stock; but yours the weapon in his hard hand. Give him your bow. Give him your wisdom. The war is resumed. Reach out your hand to Greece. Come, Philoctetes! Come from the hunting of birds. Hunt Troy! Already the grey soldier Odysseus and the poet Demodocus have landed on Lemnos, brought here by the voice of an oracle to take you back. Do you hear them? And in sight: trampling the beach, resolute. Do you guess them while the string of your bow thuds and the partridge dies in the sky? Do you hear the human word? War!

Why is Heracles a god? He stifled the snake in his cradle; he broke the nine-headed hydra; he strangled Antaeus, the son of Earth. What is a man? Carnivorous, predatory, angry, imperious, cruel, embattled: he bleeds, and he bleeds. To live is to do. To do is to fight. I who fought perfectly rose to the perfect gods.

If only Zeus nodded and I could strike down the arrogant wall of Troy with this club; no, with my fists! But I obey the captain on Olympus. (*Exit.*)

SCENE ONE

Enter Odysseus, Demodocus, several guards, and the chorus, all from the same side. Odysseus leads.

ODYSSEUS. The old horrible stench. I remember it. All but unbearable. Come, my friends. I recognize the area. Guards, spread out and look for our man, each in a different direction.

DEMODOCUS. Are we really on the spot, Odysseus?

ODYSSEUS. On the spot or near it. The darkness of Lemnos under the heavy trees. The stairways of rocks and caves. The inhuman silence. Here, Demodocus, I myself brought the unhappy man ten years ago at the command of Agamemnon. Myself guiltless, obedient to my superiors. Innocent, I abandoned Philoctetes here in his sleep. His wound stank just so. All but unbearable. Medon, his companion, helped me as I carried him, and remained with him. And is he still alive, I wonder? Or did he too abandon this man, whom surely the gods hate, since they separated him from the warmth of home, woman, and companionship.

FIRST SOLDIER. Careful, Odysseus, careful. I would suppose, myself, that the gods, if in fact they hated him, have now restored him to favor. Didn't the oracle Calchas pronounce him the chosen man to defeat Troy, he and that awesome soldier, Pyrrhus, the son of unforgettable Achilles?

ODYSSEUS. You are right. A strange destiny for a man.

DEMODOCUS. To be rejected, and out of rejection to be the savior. To be spurned, and out of contempt to be exalted!

FIFTH SOLDIER. Men! Here's a cave, and what look like the remains of a fire!

DEMODOCUS. So they are. And a recent fire, I should say. Would this be his shelter?

ODYSSEUS. Go in, my friend. Take your sword in hand.

DEMODOCUS, *within*. It is the cave, gentlemen! And furnished. Almost a house. (*Laughing.*) A villa!

ODYSSEUS. What do you see?

DEMODOCUS. Strange. Two couches covered with skins—Medon is still alive. Utensils—all of wood—table, benches, some knives—bronze basins and pots—

ODYSSEUS. Those we left him.

DEMODOCUS, *emerging*. And stone tools. A hearth. And something in the back of the cave—a light penetrates there from a far-away, high opening. It's a shop—almost like a carpenter's. Dozens of objects; a net—

ODYSSEUS. Bows too? Tell us.

DEMODOCUS. I think not. But why do you hang back, Odysseus, and your hand on the sword? Go in yourself.

ODYSSEUS. The cave is empty?

DEMODOCUS. Quite empty.

ODYSSEUS. We are safe then for a little while. I propose we catch our breath and sit down.

DEMODOCUS. And wait? Just wait? Not do something?

ODYSSEUS. Control our nerves. Come, Demodocus, review with me

our plans and procedures. The sailors on the beach know their assignment—I hope—our soldiers here know theirs—or do they?

FIRST SOLDIER. By all means, Odysseus.

ODYSSEUS. Now what about us? Our first objective, in short—

DEMODOCUS. To catch Philoctetes' bow and to secure his services.

ODYSSEUS. Voluntary services. This is important. A man's skill is in his head. It may happen of course that the State compels him to place his skill at the public's disposal, and yet that skill, however attractive it appears, however effective, is not to be compared with a man's knowledge when it is offered with the zeal of freedom. Therefore it is our chief purpose to secure his voluntary submission to the Greek nations. Did I say submission? Say rather his affection.

DEMODOCUS. This failing—

FIRST SOLDIER. May it not fail!

DEMODOCUS. This failing, our objective shifts and we take him with us by force, the man and the bow.

ODYSSEUS. You will ask me why, my friends, and I will conceal nothing from you. The Trojans too have heard the oracle, and they too are sailing this way!

FIRST SOLDIER. The Trojans! How did they hear of it? What shall we do?

ODYSSEUS. Everything has been foreseen by the high command. Calchas the oracle spoke for all men when he declared that he who possesses the bow of Philoctetes is fated to victory by mere preponderance of power. Don't the Trojans have ears? Have they no ships? Are they unacquainted with the position of this island? I didn't have to see their ships with my own eyes to know that they too are sailing to Lemnos. Sailing? Perhaps they have landed in another bay already; perhaps they have bribed Philoctetes away before we arrived. Who knows? But if not, our objective is at the very least to prevent the enemy from laying hands on him. In his bitterness against us he might yield to them, traitor, without much persuasion. Yet if he escapes from us, Demodocus?

DEMODOCUS. We are still to try at least to secure the bow itself, by force or by fraud; perhaps in his sleep, perhaps by bribing Medon. It may be that we Greeks will have skill enough to understand its workmanship, and be able to copy it for the use of our troops.

ODYSSEUS. Well spoken, my friend. And yet this is not our final objective after all.

DEMODOCUS. What do you mean? This is all I have been told.

ODYSSEUS. Because I've not revealed all our orders yet.

DEMODOCUS. What remains?

ODYSSEUS. If all else fails, to kill him.

DEMODOCUS. Philoctetes?

FIRST SOLDIER. Why? Why kill him? Why kill the innocent man?

ODYSSEUS. You are a little slow, my friends. If the man doesn't come with us, he may defect to Troy. True, he may bellow on his knees that he hates the animals. But we'd be fools to believe him. Therefore, if worse comes to worst, and we cannot capture and bind him, we must try to kill him. Believe me, I say this without pleasure. These are the orders. You look hesitant. I ask you—and this is the only permissible question—whether we are ready to implement our orders.

SECOND SOLDIER. If necessary, Odysseus, if necessary.

THIRD SOLDIER. God knows we are loyal. Yet God forbid we should pour out the blood of a fellow Greek.

FOURTH SOLDIER. God forbid. Yet you know best what fighters we have been, always at your side; and how else is this endless, sorrowful war to end?

ODYSSEUS. Enough. So, Demodocus. The rest is yours. You were not chosen for this mission without good reason. Me and the other chiefs Philoctetes hates, as though we and not the serpent had bitten his ankle. But you are a secondary man, a lieutenant: noble in your own right, a man I have always honored in Ithaca at my table, among my dearest companions, young as you are; but not one in high authority. Philoctetes doesn't know you. He can hate you only as a Greek, but you will easily persuade him to like you as a man. Furthermore, you are skilled with your speech. To whom else do we turn, after the fighting or during a feast, for a love-ditty, or a hymn to battle, or a ballad of old heroes, Jason, Theseus, Perseus, and all the rest? Though even as a spearsman you are by no means a man whom the enemy would ignore. Your role it will be, therefore, to enchant the heart of Philoctetes with sinuous, inveigling words and strong appeals. You will invoke the purpose of the gods: that immense glory shall come to Philoctetes and that by means of him Troy is to fall. Next, the suffering of the Greeks: and here you will stir in his heart the emotion of kinship, the longing for one's own which makes even their crimes bearable. Next, the promise of a cure for his wound, solemnly affirmed by the gods through the mouth of Calchas. Next, great prizes and rewards: promise him particularly the gift of young women, those we captured from Cilicia when Achilles was still alive. Next, the balm of human companionship: what man, unless he be insane, can desire—look about you!—this ghastly solitude; what man does not long now and then to hear the cozy squabble of a market-place, the hubbub of a tavern, the cries of children at play in the yard, the soft, unique word of a loving woman, the advice of a cautious father? Bring these to his mind, Demodocus, make him weep. And if he reproaches us once more for abandoning him at Lemnos, swear to our innocence and good will. Did we plot the serpent's bite? Did we bribe the oracle? No. Gladly indeed would we have taken him with us,

had his stench—the sign of his pollution—not made his presence unendurable, demoralizing to generals and soldiers alike. But finally, strike a solemn note: Duty, Demodocus—duty to our nation and to our cause: the call to arms. What man shall disobey? Troy, sitting like a harpy across the Hellespont, cramming down our ships and our men, those who sail peacefully into the hospitable Black Sea, Troy that ruins our commerce with Colchis and the Scythians, Troy must be, shall be cut down!

ALL. Bravo!

ODYSSEUS. This is war! Not a children's game. Impress him with this, Demodocus: that you are serious; that there is little room in these matters for selfish resentments and private quarrels. You yourself are here on a mission, under orders—not on a holiday in the islands: a Greek, not a rootless outlaw or a savage. We are not animals; we are citizens, citizens of Greek states; and he too, on Lemnos or in India, is a citizen. Let him indulge his tastes and his antagonisms and his appetites; but only, I say, only after having done his duty to Greece.

FIRST SOLDIER. This is soundly spoken, Odysseus. What a pity Philoctetes is not here now. You would have persuaded him already.

DEMODOCUS. Yes, your words carry a great deal of weight, as always, Odysseus. You are a king. And yet they trouble me a little, too, even though you praise me; far more, needless to say, than I deserve. In any case, I am young, and it would be too bold of me to argue with you at all. Quite on the contrary, I will do my best to follow your instructions, to use your very words if I can, and to disguise myself as a shipwrecked Greek as we have planned. May God prosper me, and may he bring to a quick end this bitter war in which none of us—not one—has escaped without grim pain.

TENTH SOLDIER. Don't speak of miseries, I beg you.

DEMODOCUS. But tell me, Odysseus, shall I let Philoctetes know that his father is dead, and that his son, like your own Telemachus, eagerly sends every month for news of him?

ODYSSEUS. What do you think?

DEMODOCUS. I should like to. How moved he will be! And then, thankful to us, which is important.

ODYSSEUS. Nevertheless, I have to overrule you. No doubt he will ask you for news; but you will pretend to know nothing of his affairs. This will whet his appetite for a return among those of us who know. Perhaps you could hint, say you have heard rumors, but is it about him, or about somebody else? You don't know. *You* would give him security, even the security of misery; *I* will play on his anxiety.

DEMODOCUS. It will be hard for me; but I'll do—

Enter a guard, running.

GUARD. Odysseus, away from here!

ODYSSEUS. Is he coming?

GUARD. Yes! I saw two men from my hill—still in the distance, but coming this way by a path; one limping, carrying a bow; the other, two steps behind, fowl in his hands. Philoctetes and Medon, who else?

ODYSSEUS. Good work. Recall the other guards. (*The guard is about to whistle.*) Not this way, idiot. Run. (*To the chorus.*) And two of you. (*The guard and two soldiers from the chorus leave.*) Demodocus—let me see—not in the cave certainly—but here—just behind—(*Leads Demodocus to a hiding place.*) Excellent. You know what to do. The shipwreck and so forth. And the words. Eloquence. No threats above all; not at this point. Gentle. Then, when he is soft, suddenly I appear. I reveal the revelation of Calchas. You and I, astonished to meet here. And so forth. Have we left traces here?

FIRST SOLDIER. I think not.

ODYSSEUS. Where—ah! (*Four men return.*) Two men still missing. We have to wait. (*Paces up and down.*) Remember: not a word about Calchas and the prophecy. Or about the Trojans. That's for me. You melt him. Where are these men? Nitwits. They'll ruin—there! (*The last two men arrive.*) Hurry up, fools. All here? No one missing?

FIRST SOLDIER. All present, Odysseus.

ODYSSEUS, to one guard. You. Stay nearby—but hidden. Look and listen. If there's trouble, report to him. (*Points to the second guard.*) You will be posted midway between this place and the ship; report back to me anything he reports to you. Off the premises now, my friends. Back to the beach. Demodocus, good luck. There's your hiding place.

DEMODOCUS. Depend on me. (*Odysseus and the guards leave.*) Friends, I think I will stand a little farther off, not here. I'll observe their coming from a safe point and make my appearance at the best moment. (*He leaves.*)

THE CHORUS SPEAKS *with flute and drum*

SECOND SOLDIER. Does your heart beat like mine, comrades?

FIRST SOLDIER. Zeus! Be with us. Zeus! Now this man comes, and already the stench of him sickens us. Zeus! Make him pliant, bend him to us, let him shift his ways like the stream when it parts and yields before the commanding rock. Zeus! Sharpen the words of Demodocus, let each syllable be a hook to catch the soul of this man. Zeus! We are your people. Will you forsake us? Are we to die in the futile plain where bones of men, men once ordinary, men once reasonably unhappy, lie where the oak and the tamarisk and the myrtle grew, now a barren country, yellow with war, pocked with spears and rusted swords and

shreds of armor, and the vultures nest in the skulls of our friends? Zeus! Give us this man and his weapon and the end of this abomination!

ALL. So be it!

THIRD SOLDIER. Men, do you know how old I was when I enlisted for the war? Twenty-five years old, beginning barely the pleasure of being a man, of being worth a woman's sly glances, of taking my place in the Assembly, uttering my first words there, surprised almost that I was taken seriously, no longer a boy, beginning the best years of a man; and these years, oh my friends, these lovely years in which I should have found a kind wife, in which I might have established a house and grown both in wealth and reputation, I have spent them like a beast among beasts in the sand; yes, my mouth filled with sand when we crawled on the beach and drove back the Trojans in the first onslaught, like a beast sweating and growling, muck-covered, fornicating with random whores of the camp, swilling rancid wine, swearing over dice, scraping the blood off the rings I stole from the dead—me, the son of a good man, Schedios of Pronnoi, before whom even now I would blush to say a foul word.

FOURTH SOLDIER. This is my story too.

FIFTH SOLDIER. Fifteen years we are children, fifteen years we are old men; and that little space between, must we spend it howling in the attack, luckless if we die, luckless if we live, life either killed or wasted? And why? Why? What is it to us, I ask, though timidly?

SIXTH SOLDIER. Why are we driven and driven and driven?

The following in rapid succession.

SEVENTH SOLDIER. Because EIGHTH. after all other means of conciliation NINTH. had failed and after FIFTH. we had seen treaties broken and solemn obligations cynically trampled underfoot, TENTH. we Greeks, driven beyond endurance FIRST. by provocative acts of the enemy, SECOND. with the utmost reluctance THIRD. (conscious of FOURTH. the highest claims of justice)

Pause.

FIRST SOLDIER. Again!

Rapidly again.

NINTH SOLDIER. had failed and after FOURTH. the highest claims of justice FIFTH. we had seen treaties broken and solemn obligations cynically trampled underfoot, EIGHTH. after all other means of conciliation FIRST. by provocative acts of the enemy TENTH. we Greeks, driven beyond endurance SECOND. with the utmost reluctance THIRD. conscious of SEVENTH. Because!

Two drum-beats.

SIXTH SOLDIER. But how much are you and I—not Agamemnon, not Menelaus, but you and I—to profit by this war even if we stay alive?

Rapidly again.

SEVENTH SOLDIER. Yes! EIGHTH. No! NINTH. No! TENTH. Yes!
FIRST. Yes! SECOND. No! THIRD. Yes! FOURTH. Yes! FIFTH. No!

ALL. Yes No! (Two drum-beats)

SIXTH SOLDIER. But I asked how much. FIRST. Zeus, give us quick victory! SECOND. Wipe out Ilion! THIRD. Let us return! FOURTH. Alive! FIFTH. Rich with booty! SIXTH. Praised!

SEVENTH SOLDIER. Give to us Philoctetes and the mysterious bow, to us who are dumb, we confess it, to us who fight as our fathers fought, who cannot devise and invent, whose minds are daily and weekly; nice people, effective enough, reliable, and loyal even when we grumble, but with minds not adequate to the extraordinary, needing help when troubles grow out of hand.

EIGHTH SOLDIER. What can that weapon be?

NINTH SOLDIER. Oh the beaches of Troy, though we move away, will hold our shadows as if engraved on the sand.

TENTH SOLDIER. Even the alive have epitaphs.

Demodocus appears.

DEMODOCUS. He's coming! Scatter! Back to the ships!

FIRST SOLDIER. We'll go back only a little ways, Demodocus, in case you need sudden help.

All leave.

SCENE TWO

Enter Philoctetes and Medon. Medon is carrying a few partridges and a sprig of thyme, Philoctetes the bow. Philoctetes drags himself and groans.

PHILOCTETES. Let me stop awhile, Medon. I'm tired, tired. We could sit down awhile. (*Medon offers to help him.*) No no, it's all right. Dear friend, sit farther off. Why should you suffer my suffering? This stench oozes into my very sleep and pollutes my dreams; and you so patient, with a divine pretence of not noticing. There is a good breeze here. Listen to it. (*Hums as though imitating the wind.*) Sweet Lemnos. The way the leaves tinkle all day long, the trees remind me of indolent cows with bells about their necks. Do you hear the surf from here? Brushing the coat of Lemnos always, always, always, always. Clean Lemnos. And the gulls are the island's own wings, or its way of lifting itself and looking about over the Aegean. Medon, I'll help you pluck our catch for the day. No masters and servants here. Philoctetes works with his hands. Look. Thick. Hard. Efficient. I am now, good sir, become worthy of being a slave, having learned to work. I had a brain

always; but now I have hands too. Did you see how I shot those partridges? I hardly aimed. As though my arrows had an intelligence of their own. Retrievers. I would have been Troy's horror—all Troy a great shadowing kingfisher, and my uncanny arrow—plock!—dead it falls, moaning, and then my knife in its belly. Ugly thought, Medon. How cool it is here. If only I could smell the fragrance that must be there—there—on that flower, across that pad of moss. Fragrance. (Pause.) This afternoon, my friend, we have to scrub and scrape. I intend us to have a mirror. I want a mirror in our palace. Why? For the sheer unnecessary extravagance of it. We'll use the bottom of our bronze ewer. (Medon rises.) Yes, quite. The birds have to be plucked. (Medon helps him up.) Thank you. Thank you. (Cries out.) Oh! Medon, the attack is coming again soon. God, what have I done to deserve this? Hush. Let me lean on you a little. Breathe the sprig of thyme. (They walk on, vanish, reappear by the cave. Philoctetes sits down in front of it while Medon takes the fowl into the cave. Philoctetes wipes his face, closes his eyes awhile, nurses his foot, rises, and then suddenly stops dead.) Medon!! (Medon rushes out.) Footprints! People! Your sword! (Medon dashes into the cave again and returns with his sword.) Your back to the cave! (Loud.) Show yourself! Come out! We are armed men here! Armed! No tricks and come out!

DEMODOCUS, off-stage. Peace, my friends. Here is a man who can do no harm, a shipwrecked man. (Appears.) I am a Greek. Demodocus is my name. Terpius was my father. Citizens of Ithaca.

PHILOCTETES, full of contempt. A fine recommendation. A scoundrel from Ithaca. Come closer, let me see you. Now stay where you are. Medon, search him. (Medon does so and seizes a knife, which he gives to Philoctetes.)

DEMODOCUS. You are welcome to it, my friends, whoever you are.

PHILOCTETES. You were shipwrecked?

DEMODOCUS. Yes.

PHILOCTETES. Your clothes are dry, and you don't look exhausted. How is that?

DEMODOCUS. I had a calm journey of it on the raft for a whole day—all too calm. And I have slept here on the island already. I beached, I think, twelve hours ago or so. But tell me—

PHILOCTETES. Where are your companions?

DEMODOCUS. I am alone. I know nothing of anyone else on my ship. Will you treat me as a guest or will you injure me, whoever you are? I have neither money nor goods.

PHILOCTETES. You'll come to no harm unless you look for it. We are not Greeks. What sank your ship? An enemy? A storm?

DEMODOCUS. A storm. But will you tell me where I am? Am I right to believe I landed on an island? Tenedos, perhaps?

PHILOCTETES. This is Lemnos.

DEMODOCUS. Lemnos! Then you—is it possible? Is it? You are Philoctetes! Alive!

PHILOCTETES. You know my name.

DEMODOCUS. And who doesn't? Believe me, you are remembered, and not only by me. Philoctetes! Is it possible? How many times at bivouac your sad story has been retold, and you have been pitied, and we have wondered, is Philoctetes still alive, and his companion with him?

PHILOCTETES. What bivouac? Not before Troy, surely?

DEMODOCUS. Troy too surely. Lucky man, not even to know. Yes, before Troy. Still before Troy. War and war, and no end in sight, no guessing even.

PHILOCTETES. Amazing. And you are one of the Greeks? A soldier?

DEMODOCUS. I am.

PHILOCTETES. I don't remember you.

DEMODOCUS. I was never among the first, and then ten years ago, Philoctetes, I was a mere boy. You couldn't know me then. And even now I am better known among the Greeks for my singing than for my fighting, though even as a fighter I am not a man whom the enemy would ignore.

PHILOCTETES. And was it for singing a false note, my friend, that those honest Greeks set you on a ship and sent you off?

DEMODOCUS. No, I am not an exile. I was sent to levy a thousand men in Arcadia—laggards!—but the storm wrecked our ship, and I, perhaps, am the only survivor. A raft carried me here. But why do you still aim your arrow at me?

PHILOCTETES, *lowering the bow*. I've lost the habit of entertaining. Come sit down.

DEMODOCUS, *sitting against a tree*. Thank you. (*Medon brings out a bowl of water and a dish of fruit.*) Many, many thanks. Good.

PHILOCTETES. You were levying another thousand men. It's been a thirsty war.

DEMODOCUS. Calamitous. The misery! And last year—

PHILOCTETES. Tell me no stories. I think I would vomit. No, my friend, take advantage of your accident; explain it as intended by the gods, stretch your limbs, and feel what peace is like.

DEMODOCUS. I feel it already in every bone, kind Philoctetes. The change is so sudden, I keep wondering, is it me talking here? And to Philoctetes! Who would have thought it! Talking under trees. Trees! If you saw the plain of Troy. Scarred, sacked, cracked, every leaf and every blade of grass blasted. The heather uprooted. Bones and sand and

mud. Howls of the dying. The worse quiet of the finished dying. And now I sit here drinking clean water and simply eating figs.

PHILOCTETES. Tonight you will eat a curd of sheep's milk and honey we call "gods' food." Other dishes too, oddities I promise you'll enjoy. Not a bad place, is it, for a man who was at the point of drowning this morning?

DEMODOCUS. Not this morning. Yesterday. But a fine place, yes.

PHILOCTETES. Later we'll walk half-up a cliff to watch the night shut down the sea and the island. But without a key. We live in God's own safety. No keys here—I never thought of it before! No robbers. No fears. Come, the island is yours. Dip into it with both hands.

DEMODOCUS. This is Elysium. Ten years of solitude have not coarsened you. You are infinitely courteous. But tell me. I daresay other men have landed here in all that time.

PHILOCTETES. Possibly.

DEMODOCUS, *sitting up*. Who? And when?

PHILOCTETES. I don't know. We've seen no one. But perhaps on another part of the island.

DEMODOCUS. No one? In all that time?

PHILOCTETES. Why do you ask so suspiciously?

DEMODOCUS. Not suspiciously, my friend, only with some surprise. The Trojans, we understand, sail rather often in this direction.

PHILOCTETES. They are welcome too, if they land here.

DEMODOCUS. The enemy?

PHILOCTETES. You are my enemy too. All mankind is my enemy.

DEMODOCUS. Why do you say such a thing, Philoctetes?

PHILOCTETES. Why do I say such a thing! Medon, did you hear this question? I thank you of course—you made a gesture—oh, I notice!—yet you mastered yourself. But your fellow Greeks did not make the effort; no, they kicked me out of their ranks, like a leper, like a murderer. They're bleeding before Troy, thank God; that's justice of a kind. Kicked me, I said. My rank was nothing, my opinion wasn't asked. In my collapse they carried me here—your master Odysseus, you know it as well as I—carried me here and threw me on the ground like some odious garbage and thought I would die. But I didn't die. Here I am to spit on them yet.

DEMODOCUS. I'm sorry I angered you, Philoctetes; I understand your grievance, believe me.

PHILOCTETES. I'm too ready to burst out. But ten years with no one except Medon to complain to! I make more noise than damage, however. And then what grievance? I have no grievance. This island has been my happiness. Never had I dreamed when I was a boy, wishing

I could be another Heracles, that I could find this perfection. Yet I hate the Greeks who brought it to me. Take the paradox.

DEMODOCUS. Well, it was not perfection they meant for you. And yet—let me ask you—is there not a thrust in your blood toward your own brothers? I only ask—do you ever wonder, do you ever feel a small questioning ache, would you not like me to tell you whether your old companions are still alive, or how they fare—Agamemnon and pitiful Menelaus, the mountainous Ajax, Meriones, audacious Diomedes, old Nestor, Achilles perhaps and his companion the generous Patroclus, or even, even my own master Odysseus?

PHILOCTETES. God forbid. Let me rather hear you sing one of your hymns. You've seen how a dog shakes his body free of water after a dip. That is the way I have shaken off me your miserable mammal affairs. Don't I remember how Achilles and his men—the generous Patroclus among them—raced over Skyros from shore to shore, and killed every man on the island? And why? Because they refused the privilege of being our allies, that is to say, of loading our ships with their cattle, wine, grain and weapons. And we stood by and looked stern: this is war, we said, not a child's game. Thank heaven we had a Cause to defend us from the annoyance of feeling pity or guilt. And before that, in Aulis, didn't Agamemnon kill his own daughter to make the wind blow? Poor girl. She thought they were dressing her for her wedding. This time, besides looking stern, we allowed ourselves a touch of noble grief. We even managed it so that the girl, who saw there was no rescue, put on a cheerful air and announced that she had decided to sacrifice herself for the common good. It was quite a bargain for us. We had the Cause, to be sure, which we could blame for her death. But now there was nobody to blame at all. She wanted to die. She said so. So we built a monument to her, and placed on it—come now, you must have been there—perhaps you were the one who composed the item, since you are a poet.

DEMODOCUS. No, no, but I remember.

PHILOCTETES. "This is Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon, who freely gave her blood in the cause of her grateful country." But it wasn't much of a monument, we had little time; the wind did rise, do you remember? The gods were satisfied. But my eyes were opened. That virgin's carcass lay there so that I, Philoctetes, might put my hands on one of Priam's coffers of gold in Troy. It was soon after that the serpent bit me.

DEMODOCUS. You're unjust to yourself, and perhaps to many of us, Philoctetes. Do you forget the Trojan pirates? Their incursions against our shipping? Their ravages in our own territories? Didn't the rascal Paris abduct Menelaus' wife in Sparta? You yourselves, in Malis—I know it—lost hundreds of sheep to them every year. Once they even ventured to Ithaca and stole three of our ships.

PHILOCTETES. My young friend, what is that on your arm?

DEMODOCUS. A scar.

PHILOCTETES. Earned, as they say, in this war?

DEMODOCUS. Yes.

PHILOCTETES. An honorable wound?

DEMODOCUS. I hope so! Facing the enemy, not running from him.

PHILOCTETES. Is it a wound you still feel?

DEMODOCUS. I'm afraid so. And will forever. I play the lyre with my left hand now.

PHILOCTETES. Poor fool, you should have run from the enemy and given him your ships—and my sheep too—and in fact invited them to rule Ithaca itself to keep that one arm, I say.

DEMODOCUS. You're joking, Philoctetes. Invited them to rule Ithaca!

PHILOCTETES. Joking? Me? I've no talent for jokes. I said, invited them to rule Ithaca. Fool! Were I a harp-player or a farmer or an iron-monger, would I care whether the man who ruled me was an Ithacan or an Abyssinian? But you—you speak like a sensible man, and yet you would lose your life rather than see some Trojan make off with one of your goats. Pah! (*Spits.*) Look at my Lemnos. Here, only here, unraveled from mankind, here in my stench, I have ceased to be a criminal. Incursions indeed! Don't I know my own guts, can't I read myself and tell you why I sailed for Troy? I sailed for that coffer of gold. And I was sick of my wife as well and wanted one of Priam's girls, I didn't care which! That coffer of gold! I could see the coins blinking already in Agamemnon's eyes. And your ape-chested, fat-faced Odysseus—

DEMODOCUS. Philoctetes!

PHILOCTETES. He won't hear you now! That lubberly, ragged, thirsty, patched-up Odysseus from Ithaca, where people eat stones for supper. Couldn't he see himself dining in Troy on a red cushion, a leg of mutton in each hand! Pah! Here I shook it all off, like the dog. A man stops being a criminal only when he is alone.

DEMODOCUS. What a hard saying that is, Philoctetes. But you've convinced me that I should not tell you anything about these men, these criminals. Not even who died.

PHILOCTETES. Ah? Some of them died? Some of the great ones, I hope.

DEMODOCUS. Can you expect otherwise, after ten years?

PHILOCTETES. I will ask you one question. I had a father at home, a wife, a son—a son eight years old—and two younger brothers. . . .

DEMODOCUS, *taking his hand*. I don't know anything, Philoctetes. If only I did. Bad news is better than none. If you were among us again, you would know, but here—

PHILOCTETES. I can live without news. My question was only a form. I've become another man. I will show you about my world by and by; what I and Medon have accomplished; the tools we use; the comforts we knocked out of nature; the machines we made. *You* will ask the questions, believe me. *My* question was only a form. I've captured the sun's rays; a river moves wheels for me; this bow you see in my hands—made by my system—has power and accuracy enough to pierce a dozen Troys through the liver; I make pots on a wheel; I have an orchard and a field where goats and sheep graze; the hedgehog and the mole give me their hides; I have hemp for my nets; reeds for my arrows; the porcupine supplies me with needles. The wild olive grows here, and wild barley too. I gather saffron on the hillsides for spice. The earth is plentiful: pomegranates, mulberries, plums, quinces, almonds, and even acorns are useful. We baked our first bread from crushed acorns, will you believe it? The goats give us milk and cheese and meat. Sometimes we kill a boar. From the sea we catch mullet, bass, bream, and tunny; from the air and ground pheasants, quail, partridges, rock-doves. And more, and more: wonders! But greatest wonder of them all, here where men left me to rot, in this silence I can think at last; my mind bounds unimpeded to the constellations and the tentative realms of all the ultimates. You, poor fools, your claptrap thoughts, as soon as they are shot out, stumble over "Can I afford a new coat?" or "Will the neighbors laugh at me?" or "My wife is getting fat!" Pah! Give me no news, I beg you. My question was pure form. News! A child of ten has all the news the world will ever provide—that a man will be honest only if he is scared. How is *your* honesty, my friend?

DEMODOCUS. Don't ask me, Philoctetes. I'm so troubled, so uneasy. Your freedom makes me dizzy. When I stand before Agamemnon, I dare not even *think* an unpleasantness against him; hardly so even when I am alone. Agamemnon is still alive, you see.

PHILOCTETES. Ah?

DEMODOCUS. And Menelaus too.

PHILOCTETES. Achilles defending them, of course, with a great bluster.

DEMODOCUS. No more, Philoctetes.

PHILOCTETES. Impossible. Achilles could die?

DEMODOCUS. And Patroclus too.

PHILOCTETES. Who could have killed Achilles?

DEMODOCUS. Hardly believable, but Paris did, with an arrow. A fluke, a mere fluke.

PHILOCTETES. Well, what's all that to me? But you're still hungry, I'm sure. Medon! Will you bring our young soldier and me a loaf of bread and some plums? I talk like a lord! No wine, alas; but we do

have bread of a kind. (*Medon brings the dishes.*) Barley, you see, unleavened, not fit for a young nobleman, of course.

DEMODOCUS. Excellent. Excellent. I marvel at you. The longer I am here—no, I daren't say it.

PHILOCTETES. Dare! Dare! I am perfectly meek and in any case I know what you will say.

DEMODOCUS. Then I *will* dare say that I have a great, great wish to lure you to Ilion with me—even on a raft! How a man like you is needed there! Achilles dead, Patroclus, Alcmeon, Meriones, Amphimakhos, Hypsenor, Ascalaphus, Antilochus himself and Idomeneus, Euchenor dead, Leukos dead, Amaryngceus dead, Orsilochos dead, Krethon dead, Anchialos dead, Menestheus dead—

PHILOCTETES. Yes yes yes yes, slaughter, dead dead dead. Enough, you are trying to make me weep; and I do, I do. Scoundrels! But there they lie in the sand, their brains smashed or their stomachs splattered on the ground. But your Odysseus then, is he still alive? No, tell me no more; what is it to me?

DEMODOCUS. He is still alive, God be thanked, and Diomedes too; but the glory is gone, and we remain on the plain of Ilion by a kind of habit, like men who have lost the knack of doing anything except whatever they happen to be doing—hardly remembering why and what for.

PHILOCTETES. How should anyone remember the lies he told himself ten years ago? Come, Demodocus, forget Troy. We have been two in this colony these many years, and now we'll be three.

DEMODOCUS. How is this possible? I was sent on a mission.

PHILOCTETES. I spit on your mission. Digging a grave for a thousand men. Look about you, my friend, and thank God he has delivered you out of the criminals' hands. I need another man here. To work with, but also to talk to. Perfect solitude is unbearable to a man.

DEMODOCUS. And Medon?

PHILOCTETES. I wouldn't have survived without him. But three is better than two; you would refresh us; Medon and I have talked ourselves out. Your boat sank; let them suppose it sank with you.

DEMODOCUS. Strange as this may sound, Philoctetes, I think I could bear perfect solitude. So much I have learned in these ten years. Do you know what is worst about war? Not the wounds, not the danger, not the dirt, the boredom, the fear, the fatigue, the sight of the dead, and not the longing for home—I am an orphan, in any case—but the beastly togetherness with hundreds and thousands of men. Inseparable. Day and night the noise and smell of other men, the hearty and disgusting comradeship, the bellowing in unison. Not even a privy to oneself. Beds—on the ground, of course—with fifty other beds. A large table where twenty eat at once. No thought without a chorus. Then, out of despair, you begin to confide confidences over a cup of wine to a dozen

bearded, swilling solitudes—out go your secrets into muddy ears—you hate it afterwards; you are emptied into a gutter. Am I a man, you cry, God, am I a man or am I the cell of a polyp? And more!—What's the matter?

PHILOCTETES, *in pain*. My friend—oh—don't worry, I heard all you said—I'm glad—welcome now—

DEMODOCUS. But you're ill! What can I do?

PHILOCTETES. The pain is coming to my foot. Don't call Medon. He has troubles enough with me.

DEMODOCUS. But tell me what I can do.

PHILOCTETES. Nothing. I'm going to lose my senses. Hold me. No. Stay away. (*Demodocus is averting and covering his face.*) My friend—pity me—the gods have cursed me. I don't know why. Pity me.

DEMODOCUS. I do. Forgive me and let me help you.

PHILOCTETES. No, I'll lie down. I'll sleep an hour. It's a kind of sleep. Stay here. Wait for me. I can bear it.

DEMODOCUS. Let me hold the bow for you. I'll wait here for you. (*Philoctetes gives him the bow.*) Go sleep. Quickly.

PHILOCTETES. I will. You are kind. (*Stumbles toward the cave and cries out as he almost runs.*) Medon! Medon! (*Exit.*)

DEMODOCUS, *after a pause*. Kind. I am kind. Oh Philoctetes, if you could see the black liar's heart of me!

THE CHORUS SPEAKS *with harp and drum*

Demodocus is staring at the bow in his hand. Suddenly one of the members of the chorus appears. He looks about him. All is safe. He beckons to the First Soldier, who emerges from his hiding place. Later the other members appear.

FIRST SOLDIER, *half-aloud*. Demodocus!

DEMODOCUS, *startled*. Yes.

SECOND SOLDIER. Not so loud.

FIRST SOLDIER. We heard everything. Masterfully done!

SECOND SOLDIER. Masterfully!

FIRST SOLDIER. At first we worried. "Why isn't he following instructions?" we asked each other. And then you call out to him—"I say, give me the bow"—and he gives it to you like a child.

SECOND SOLDIER. You have to remember he doesn't know how important it is.

Enter another man.

THIRD SOLDIER, to *First Soldier*. We've sent the man, captain.

DEMODOCUS. Where have you sent what man?

FIRST SOLDIER. One of us, to contact Odysseus. He should know.

DEMODOCUS. Know what, master busybody? Is it your duty to spy on me?

By this time the entire chorus, except the man dispatched to Odysseus, has entered.

FIRST SOLDIER. No sir, I assure you. I thought I was simply obeying Odysseus' orders in alerting the guard who has to alert the other guard. But why wait for Odysseus to come? We've got the bow.

THIRD SOLDIER. Now's the time to bolt.

FOURTH SOLDIER. Is this the bow we want?

FIFTH SOLDIER. The bow itself. Oh, I could dance and shout! (*He is hushed down.*)

FIRST SOLDIER, to *Demodocus*. May I—?

DEMODOCUS. Hands off! What I do with the bow concerns me.

FIRST SOLDIER. Do with the bow? What *can* you do with the bow? We have it! Have it!

SEVENTH SOLDIER. Why stand and wait here, Demodocus? Let's go and meet Odysseus halfway.

EIGHTH SOLDIER. I know why he hesitates.

NINTH SOLDIER. Why?

SIXTH SOLDIER. He has made friends with Philoctetes.

EIGHTH SOLDIER. No, I didn't mean that. Don't you remember that we really want Philoctetes himself? Who knows whether we can copy this bow? Whether we can handle it? What's it made of? Why does it have that curious knob in the middle? What kind of arrow does it take? I wouldn't dare use it. With this bow, the oracle said, we are to win the war. But it's come into our hands too easily, that's all.

FOURTH SOLDIER. Are we sure this is really the bow itself?

FIRST SOLDIER. Yes, we're sure. Always a doubter in the crowd. Always a questioner. You look at the smooth sheet of fresh snow on a mountaintop, your eyes are dazzled, and yet you know that *somebody* is bound to say, "But is it really white?" Demodocus, no more of this—let's take the bow to the ship at least, and reason with Philoctetes afterward.

SECOND SOLDIER. From a position of strength.

THIRD SOLDIER. A bird in hand.

DEMODOCUS. A man who trusted me in the middle of my lies gave me the bow to safekeep for him.

FIRST SOLDIER. You asked and took it.

DEMODOCUS, *angry*. He gave it to me! What if I walked into the

cave while you stare at me and placed it in his companion's hand, scoundrel that I am?

FIRST SOLDIER. And the war? FIFTH. We've got orders, Demodocus. SIXTH. The whole army! NINTH. God, oh God, oh God, I see it, another five years before Troy, my whole life gone. I can't bear it. THIRD. Let's make a rush for it. FIRST. Insubordination. SECOND. Demodocus has made friends with Philoctetes. SIXTH. That's what I said before. SEVENTH. Well, Philoctetes is a Greek.

EIGHTH SOLDIER. A Greek! Did you hear him talk about the Greeks? He would eat us all boiled and salted if he could. And Demodocus was supposed to win him over. Instead it was Philoctetes who won *him* over.

NINTH SOLDIER. The Trojans will get the bow! I see it!

SEVERAL. Quiet! God forbid! What next?

FOURTH SOLDIER. Yes, the Trojans! Why not? They'll send Pandarus or another one of their professionals, and *he* won't mind a few lies and a length of dagger in the back if that's the way to purchase the bow.

FIRST SOLDIER. Demodocus! SECOND. For pity's sake! THIRD. For Greece's sake! FOURTH. For our families' sake! FIFTH. For our sake! SIXTH. For your sake! SEVENTH. For honor's sake! EIGHTH. For God's sake! FIRST. Demodocus, come with us! NINTH. Quiet. I hear somebody.

Enter, running, the last member of the chorus.

TENTH SOLDIER. Here is Odysseus! Stand ready!

ALL. Thank God.

SCENE THREE

Enter Odysseus and several guards.

ODYSSEUS. You've got the bow! Good work! Bah, the stench! Where is Philoctetes?

DEMODOCUS. He became sick. He's in the cave, unconscious.

ODYSSEUS. Medon with him?

DEMODOCUS. Yes.

ODYSSEUS. All clear then. What did you tell him?

DEMODOCUS. No more than I had to. I served him the lie about the raft; I shrewdly aroused his longing for home and companionship; I successfully concealed your presence; I secured his sympathy by envying his manner of life; and I skillfully extracted the bow from his fingers. No, I did so well he almost foisted it on me.

ODYSSEUS, to *First Soldier*. What have we here?

FIRST SOLDIER. See for yourself, Odysseus.

ODYSSEUS. An attack of sarcasm! What's the meaning of this? Hand me the bow.

DEMODOCUS. Why?

ODYSSEUS. He taunts me! Why? Am I to give reasons? Why? Because the bow is our prize.

DEMODOCUS. *My* prize.

ODYSSEUS. *Our* prize, bcy. No more speeches. Give me the bow. (*Demodocus leaps up on a ledge.*) Games, is it?

DEMODOCUS. Serious games, Odysseus. I mean to wait here until Philoctetes comes to again. With your permission I will reveal the whole truth to him and ask his pardon for my lies. With your permission. I will even return the weapon to him. Then man to man, openly and clearly, you can request him to accompany us to Troy. This will be the real glory for us: to win over the man by honest persuasion.

FIRST SOLDIER. Don't stand for this, Odysseus. If you'd heard Philoctetes as we did, you'd know nothing will make him fight on our side. He says "Greek" the way a tiger growls.

ODYSSEUS. I see. I see. This calls for one or two small changes. Come, Demodocus, I'll not force the weapon out of your hands. In any case, you're half my age and stronger than I am by far; and if men start quarreling on a lonely mission of this kind, why then they might as well give up the war altogether.

DEMODOCUS. Would that be a horror, Odysseus?

ODYSSEUS. No, my boy, you will not make a monster out of me. I want peace also. And that is precisely why I want the bow. But what I want doesn't matter anyway. I'm not Odysseus and you're not Demodocus.

DEMODOCUS. Who are we?

ODYSSEUS. Greeks. I am Greek item one, and you are Greek item two. The war gave me a commander. I obey him. The war gave you a commander: you obey *him*. I am not Odysseus: I am the obedience there, I am the command here. Not the commander, but the command. You are not one who obeys, but obedience.

DEMODOCUS. I ask to be relieved of my obedience. (*Laughter in the chorus.*) I'm Demodocus! And I lied, fooled a man, played with him, betrayed him! I did, not Greek item number two.

ODYSSEUS. Well, and now you are betraying ten thousand Greeks. Take the bow, my son, take it to the ship; keep it in your hands. Meantime I'll wait for Philoctetes, talk to him as quietly as I am talking to you, and persuade him to return with us.

DEMODOCUS. And if he refuses?

ODYSSEUS. We've got the bow.

DEMODOCUS. And what if the Trojans land and he makes them another?

ODYSSEUS. Our plans have included that possibility.

DEMODOCUS. You'll kill him, in short.

ODYSSEUS. I daresay I will not have to. Meantime go back to the ship.

DEMODOCUS. I mean to stay here.

FIRST SOLDIER. This is open rebellion, Odysseus. SECOND. I'm not surprised. Always two steps behind everybody, and arguing, arguing, arguing. THIRD. Argue Troy down if you can! FOURTH. One man leaps up a battlement, sword in hand; another argues whether swords are fair weapons. FIFTH. He acts as though he were the only man tired of war. SIXTH. Ten years of bloody filth and now we're to lie down and die because we're too delicate! SEVENTH. An idealist, that's what he is. EIGHTH. Give us the bow!

ODYSSEUS. Patience, my friends. All will be done gently. I myself, as it happens, do not question the loyalty of Demodocus. I understand his scruples. And yet, I don't know. I am no weakling after all; and we are many against one. We might have a scrap, shed some blood, but we would get the weapon.

DEMODOCUS. What are you saying? Would I fight you? Never! No, I took refuge here only to speak and be let alone; and I ask you simply as a man—

ODYSSEUS, *changing his tone*. Ask me nothing. Men, draw your swords. Demodocus, I summon you to take the bow to the ship. If you refuse, I advance on you myself. As I do, let the rest of you men make an assault on him; if I'm dead, take the bow, kill him, and kill Philoctetes.

DEMODOCUS. You're joking!

ODYSSEUS. We'll see. You take me for a coward or a clown. (*He draws his sword. Demodocus half raises the bow. Odysseus throws his sword to the ground and slowly advances on the puzzled Demodocus. Demodocus retreats as far as he can.*)

DEMODOCUS. Stop! Stop! (*He leaps away and disappears in the direction of the beach. Odysseus picks up his sword and sheathes it. The others do likewise.*)

ODYSSEUS. Follow him. (*A guard leaves.*)

TENTH SOLDIER. Thank God. (*Bustle of satisfaction.*)

FIRST SOLDIER. He is still a traitor, Odysseus. Will you arraign him before the Assembly?

ODYSSEUS. Nonsense. All men are traitors to their country, but they keep it secret. And secret treason is the same as loyalty. The country

thrives. All we need do is teach the boy to hide his feelings, and that will give us another patriot.

THIRD SOLDIER. Anyway, we have the bow.

FIRST SOLDIER. Now for Philoctetes!

ODYSSEUS. Now for Philoctetes. Patience again. You will be startled, I promise you. Curious things have happened. Meantime I will sit here. (*He sits on a rock in front of the cave.*)

FIFTH SOLDIER. In the open?

ODYSSEUS. In the open. When he peeps out, I will astound his eyes. Stay close, my friends; Philoctetes doesn't love me. And now, wait and be calm.

THE CHORUS SPEAKS *with harp and flute*

FIRST SOLDIER. Let us speak in praise of our master Odysseus. To speak his praise is a lovely task, because whatever the brain shapes privately concerning this man, the mouth is glad to utter, and not only in the house, to father or wife or children, but in the market place, in the Assembly, to all men. It makes a man happy when he means his praise, when he bows because of the veneration he truly feels, when he presses a hand because he loves. Now, as is fitting, I will be the man to begin.

SECOND SOLDIER. What will you praise in Odysseus?

FIRST SOLDIER. I will praise his rank among the Greeks. Though he rules a harsh land, Ithaca, which has not grain enough to feed itself, and where few trees grow among the many-colored rocks, he is the man most honored by Agamemnon. Achilles was the stronger man; but he was proud, fierce, and factious. Menelaus is Agamemnon's brother, but he is a weak soldier, one who always leans against another. Diomedes is supreme in the battlefield; but he fights even in his dreams, even in his tent at supper, even in the Assembly. To every concern brought forward in the Assembly, he answers, "Fight!" Idomeneus was the richer man; he was king of Crete; he could plunge a hand into the treasury of magnificent Egypt; his palaces were thick and strong, with deep foundations; he called us rustics; yet because of all this, half of his mind stayed at home and only with the other half did he attend to our war. And still he died. No. Agamemnon's true brother is Odysseus, though Odysseus came to him with only twelve ships—he had no more. Odysseus is strong, wise, loyal: in the fight a fighter, in council a counsellor, and, I will add, at supper a merry man. Agamemnon has said in public, "While Odysseus remains at my side, I will not lift the siege of Troy, I will never be disheartened. But if Odysseus chose to despair and withdrew from us, I too would give up." So much has Agamemnon himself said.

SECOND SOLDIER. Now let me speak of Odysseus the ruler of Ithaca. How did he come to rule? By means of conquest? By sly murder of his betters? By bribing the old men? By promising the riches of the Hesperides to our poor country? Not so. But by unanimous applause and election, promising nothing, threatening no one. And I ask you all, my friends, to tell me his achievements.

THIRD SOLDIER. He taught us to build ships to carry our own goods.

FOURTH SOLDIER. He cleared the roads of bandits by hanging some and giving work to others.

FIFTH SOLDIER. He gave the poor justice without robbing the rich.

SIXTH SOLDIER. He proclaimed the festival of Pallas Athene, at which the young compete in the chariot race and the wrestling and the javelin-throwing while the whole island, assembled, relaxes, takes sides, and is refreshed by idleness.

SEVENTH SOLDIER. He rescued the debtors from prison and proclaimed a full remission of all unpaid taxes.

EIGHTH SOLDIER. He gave us courts of justice and made an end of private revenge and family vendettas.

NINTH SOLDIER. He gave us peace without sloth—

TENTH SOLDIER. And prosperity without vice.

FIFTH SOLDIER. Let me speak in my turn of Odysseus the master. I was a smith in his household before I became a soldier. And you too, my friend—

SEVENTH SOLDIER. I was a farmer.

FIFTH SOLDIER. You will witness the truth of what I say. Did he ever speak brutally to any of us? No. Did he work us half to death, so that we lacked the living life on which to spend our earnings? No. Rather he came among us, taught us what he knew, but what amazed us, the poor, he asked to be taught; took the hammer in his own hands, spat like one of us, rolled back his sleeves, and worked.

SEVENTH SOLDIER. Once he took the plow from my hands and walked a furrow behind the ox.

FIFTH SOLDIER. Singing—do you remember?—singing all the while! So that we glowed brighter than the hot iron and worked like Cyclops under his eye.

SEVENTH SOLDIER. And he gave us holidays. "Go, my lads," he said, "it's the fifth day of the fourth week after the harvest feast, and isn't that a glorious time for a twelve-hour carouse?" Laughing as he talked, and going about boxing with the boys of the village.

EIGHTH SOLDIER. Now I will speak of Odysseus the husband and the father. Noble Telemachus, his son, walks gravely by his side as he visits his people, or sits close by when he delivers judgment. He is less strong, less lively than his father; more sober, perhaps more delicate,

more studious. But strong love binds those two men together. Have you seen Odysseus lean toward his son, whisper a question into his ear, receive a reply, and nod in approval? Wise is the father who knows how to flatter his son, who takes, or at any rate seems to take, advice from him. And from the day Telemachus was born, Odysseus himself raised him. He did not fear smiles by entering the nursery and seeing that the bottles were washed. He was the boy's tutor, playmate, guide, and father; until it happened that, although Telemachus was only in his seventeenth year when his father left, Odysseus gave him the rule of Ithaca with peace and trust in his soul.

SIXTH SOLDIER. While Penelope his wife, glad and proud, having loved no man before and no man since, waits for the kindest husband who ever lived, in mourning and solitude. And even as she weeps, she is happy in her unhappiness, because the greatness of her present misery measures the greatness of her former joy. Luckless women, whom the loss of a husband cannot make unhappy! And by this I judge the goodness of Odysseus, that those who knew him best lament his absence most.

TENTH SOLDIER. And in the camp, my friends? Whose tent is empty? His. A man without handy concubines, without purchased whores, without soft-lipped slaves. The others quarrel over a captive and threaten civil war for the sake of a naked woman. They wake at noon from their debauches too destroyed to fight. Only Odysseus keeps faith with his wife. He rises from the banquet gay but clear-headed: even-tempered, his mind firm, his body controlled, his gaze like a prong of light into the dense world.

THIRD SOLDIER. See him now, sitting patiently. His fingers hold the strings of destiny.

FOURTH SOLDIER. Almost a god.

NINTH SOLDIER. Almost a god.

SCENE FOUR

ODYSSEUS. My friends, I hear a stirring in Philoctetes' mansion. Guards, stand ready if you please. (*He gets up, draws his sword, and shouts.*) Philoctetes! (*He sits again, the sword across his knees. Medon appears. He stands in front of the cave, transfixed with amazement, taking in the whole scene—Odysseus, the guards, and the chorus—and then rushes back into the cave. No one moves. Finally Philoctetes emerges, Medon behind him.*) I am Odysseus.

PHILOCTETES, *his voice strangled.* Odysseus. (*Suddenly loud.*) My bow! He stole my bow! Robbers! Killers! An army against us! Here's our flesh, dogs. Bite, bite!

ODYSSEUS, *both hands raised*. I'm heartily glad to see you again, Philoctetes, and you, Medon. I'm pleased to see you well after so many years. Come, both of you, give me a hearing. Don't condemn us without listening. We come as your brothers.

PHILOCTETES. Is this sword on your knees my brother too? And those handsome guards? And the upstanding young man who stole my bow and disarmed me?

ODYSSEUS. Listen to me. We arrived in a strange land here. Who could predict what we should find? We are accustomed to war. Sad to say, it's our second nature by now—not to trust anyone, always to be prepared. But we are quite reassured and we want your friendship. (*He rises and returns the sword to its scabbard.*)

PHILOCTETES. What are you looking for? Is it me you want, or supplies?

ODYSSEUS. You.

PHILOCTETES. You disarmed me. Has the oracle told you that Philoctetes must die?

ODYSSEUS. Far from it. We are here to take you back to our ranks.

PHILOCTETES. How good of you! To take me back! How affable to poor Philoctetes! Oh Medon, fancy the Greeks at their Assembly one night, the place stinking with corpses. Agamemnon strokes his beard and says, "How I pity Philoctetes! Never has he had his chance for a nobly torn belly or a gloriously broken skull. My eyes fill with tears thinking of it." At which he is forced to stop, not only because of his own weeping, but because Odysseus and Menelaus and Diomedes and Idomeneus are all howling with pity too.

ODYSSEUS. Let me speak.

PHILOCTETES. Then Diomedes takes the staff in his hand and speaks. "Oh my comrades," he brings out between sobs of pity, "let us fetch the poor man back among us to share in our sour wine, our stony bread, the knocks we get every day, and the evening walks among the graves." Then they send Odysseus off with a friend, and all for pity and affection they lie to him, trick him, rob him of his weapon, and trap him in his cave. Now Odysseus, speak out, good and blunt, and if it's blood you want, here we are and skip your apologies.

ODYSSEUS. You treat me, Philoctetes, as though I were childish enough to treat you as a child. I have not come for pity of you. If circumstances required me to liquidate you, I would of course do so. This we both know; no fooling between us. As it happens, the oracle pronounces that your good fortune is ours, and ours is yours. A common interest binds us. Will you hear what it is, and rage afterwards instead of before?

PHILOCTETES. Speak out.

ODYSSEUS. The word came from Calchas the soothsayer. He left camp with two attendants, all having fasted the day before, all having cleansed themselves in the ocean and burnt to Zeus the thigh of a ram wrapped in its fat. Unto Mount Ida they went. Near the peak he advanced alone, beyond the line of trees, in the region of rock and grass and the free wind. There he stood and cried for a sign. "Zeus," he cried, "we perish, give us a word!" A crash of thunder answered, though the sky was cloudless. Then Calchas saw a frightened rabbit crouching a little distance away. An eagle rushed out of the sky and lunged for the rabbit, but missed it; lunged again and again, crying and shrilling, while the rabbit scurried to and fro in its terror, and finally sought refuge by a rock, where it had seen a hollow. But when it came to the hollow, a great serpent emerged and struck. The rabbit was dead. And then the eagle and the serpent feasted on the animal together. This miracle is what Calchas saw.

FIRST SOLDIER. It is the truth.

SECOND SOLDIER. We all swear to it.

ODYSSEUS. And he remained standing and meditating, until he heard a voice from the nowhere above him. Then he called the attendants, offered a libation in thanks to Zeus, god of all gods, power of all powers, and returned to us. This is what Calchas heard. The eagle is strength, the serpent is knowledge. Not by strength alone shall the Greeks capture Troy, but by strength allied with immortal cunning. Let Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles, be our strength. Let Philoctetes, the king of Malis, be our cunning.

PHILOCTETES. King of Malis? King?

ODYSSEUS. Your father is dead and you are king. And in the summer Troy will be overthrown. Calchas saw your bow in a dream: strong, far-shooting, unerring: its arrows deadlier than those of Crete or Thrace: your secret. With this bow we shall send into the bowels of Troy a panic like the trample of a tidal wave. And you, Philoctetes, you will live; you glorious to the end of time: cherished by Greece, your disease forgotten, an oracle among men, one of us, Philoctetes, a Greek again.

CHORUS, *low*. One of us.

PHILOCTETES. He saw the bow in his dream?

ODYSSEUS. Yes, my friend. Let this persuade you of the truth of all I have told you. How could I have known there was such a bow? Who knows except you and your man and the gods?

PHILOCTETES. I can't answer you. You are shrewder than I am. I've become too simple here, I don't see the mechanism.

FIRST SOLDIER. Noble Philoctetes, it is all the truth.

PHILOCTETES. Well, the bow is in your hands. Demodocus stole it. But I daresay he lied about his name too. Take the bow, my friend, see

if you can handle it, go back to your ship, let the pinewood oars fly, and good riddance to you all.

ODYSSEUS. But you?

PHILOCTETES. We stay here.

ODYSSEUS. Come, Philoctetes, come with us. Show us how the bow is handled; teach us how to make it; be our master and guide. We need each other. Ten years, Philoctetes, ten years of loneliness is enough. Who can bear such loneliness? Medon may die.

PHILOCTETES. God forbid.

ODYSSEUS. And then what will become of you? You will howl on your knees and go mad. A man must live among his kind. Let me tell you again the warm happiness that awaits you among us.

PHILOCTETES. I've heard it all. This is what I think of that happiness. (*Spits.*) I'm satisfied here.

ODYSSEUS. But listen anyway.

FIRST GUARD. Odysseus! I hear somebody running.

SECOND GUARD. There! there!

ODYSSEUS. Demodocus!

CHORUS. Stop! (*Three drum beats.*)

Demodocus rushes up to Philoctetes and thrusts the bow into his hands; he is out of breath.

DEMODOCUS. Take it!

PHILOCTETES, *to Medon*. Arrows!

ODYSSEUS, *to the guards*. Grab them! (*Demodocus picks up a large stone. The moment of hesitation by the guards is enough for Medon to return with a few arrows.*)

PHILOCTETES, *aiming at Odysseus*. Back! Back!

ODYSSEUS, *to the guards*. Back!

CHORUS. Oh God, help us!

DEMODOCUS, *dropping the stone*. Done! Thank God it's done.

PHILOCTETES. And done handsomely! (*To the Greeks.*) Stand back! Medon, eyes open. Now we'll see!

ODYSSEUS, *to the Greeks*. No violence, my friends. All in good time. I admire Demodocus in a way. I deplore what he did; but I admire him. It was his conscience.

DEMODOCUS. Why do you always jeer, Odysseus?

PHILOCTETES. Hands off your swords, all of you! Eyes open, Medon.

ODYSSEUS. I naturally—no, all of us here—we are a little coarse that way. We are the villains.

DEMODOCUS. Not villains, Odysseus, I don't call you villains.

PHILOCTETES. Do! Why not? Wolves and hyenas. Odysseus, don't

stand there. Call your gang together and be off. The tide will be up soon.

DEMODOCUS. Odysseus, understand me, I beg you. A man has to respect his own soul first; first of all his own soul, before everything else.

ODYSSEUS. A speech! It would melt a young girl! Well now, we'll sit here and wait till nightfall.

PHILOCTETES. But if by nightfall you're not sailing in your ship, I will shoot you straight and happy through the heart.

ODYSSEUS. Let that be as it may. Patience. (*He sits on the stone again.*)

DEMODOCUS, to *Philoctetes*. I will try to protect you.

PHILOCTETES. What are you doing?

DEMODOCUS. Going back.

PHILOCTETES. Don't be a fool, Demodocus; stay here. Odysseus is waiting to pounce on you. Look at him. Stay here, I say. You're a traitor to Greece, and congratulations to you!

DEMODOCUS. I think not. Odysseus, I am giving you a chance to persuade Philoctetes simply and honestly, as I wished from the beginning. Philoctetes, you will at least listen; so much you'll do. Am I a traitor, Odysseus?

ODYSSEUS. Of course not. Suit yourself, my lad. I'll not promote you, of course, but you're hardly a traitor. (*Demodocus advances toward the Greeks.*)

PHILOCTETES. Don't be a fool!

ODYSSEUS. Take him!! (*The guards leap at Demodocus. Medon, ready to rush to his help, is restrained by Philoctetes.*)

DEMODOCUS. Scum!

CHORUS. Well done!

ODYSSEUS. Hold the boy. From behind. Lock his arms. Bind his wrists. (*Demodocus groans.*) Just bind him. Now then, that's one.

DEMODOCUS, almost weeping. Fool, fool, fool.

PHILOCTETES, to *Medon*. You're too exposed here. Inside the cave with you. (*Medon goes into the cave.*) Is that how you'll argue me to return to Troy? Demodocus, keep heart. The game isn't finished yet. Bandits! Leap at me! Leap! Let me see you take my corpse to Troy. Alive never!

ODYSSEUS. Philoctetes! Once more! Give me the bow! How easily we could master you!

PHILOCTETES. Stand back!

ODYSSEUS, pointing to *Demodocus*. I will have this man killed before your eyes. Give me the bow!

DEMODOCUS. Don't give it! Don't! Let him do it but don't let him win! Listen to me! The Trojans are coming to find you! He'll kill you to keep you from talking to them! He'll drag you off or kill you to keep you from talking to them! Oh! (*The guard forces him to his knees.*) Don't give in!

PHILOCTETES. Now, my friends! Now! The Trojans! Yes, let them have the bow! That eagle was Hector!

ODYSSEUS. Hector is dead, poor fellow! But wait, Philoctetes, I have a spectacle for you. (*Claps his hands; addresses the guards.*) Bring in the Trojans! (*Two guards leave.*) Now my children, watch carefully. Fool Odysseus? Where is the man? You will come with us, Philoctetes, not with the Trojans. Watch the Trojans come, piping and dancing, chatting, laughing, dressed in handsome rig, watch the Trojans come! Ha! Are you all speechless? (*Enter six guards, each couple carrying a litter with a dead man on it.*) There! Your Trojan friends! Clap your hands. Bravo! No, my good hermit, no one will relieve you here, no one; you'll rot alone. Keep your bow; but you'll rot alone, I say. Look at your Trojan saviors!

FIRST SOLDIER. Odysseus, we are all amazed. What happened?

ODYSSEUS. My children, your mouths are open! And look at Demodocus, and at Philoctetes! I was not idle today, comrades. Yes, the Trojan ship was sighted soon after we landed. Not a large vessel, fortunately: some twenty rowers, and these three gentlemen. Now it has neither rowers nor gentlemen.

FIRST SOLDIER. But on our side? What?

ODYSSEUS. No casualties. Come, Philoctetes, come and look.

PHILOCTETES, *without moving*. What is this all to me? Are these my brothers? Odysseus, I tell you once again, go away, I'm getting impatient. Not even for Demodocus' sake will I surrender.

ODYSSEUS. I understand. And I give up. Let Agamemnon send another embassy. For my part, what matters is that we shall have no competitors. There they lie. You can even keep Demodocus. (*He seizes Demodocus and pushes him toward Philoctetes, then throws him down with a buffet.*) He's yours.

PHILOCTETES. Coward! (*He has instinctively taken a few steps toward Demodocus. A guard now rushes into the cave.*) Oh! (*He dashes back to the cave, but hesitates.*)

MEDON, *within*. Master!

ODYSSEUS. Stay here! In the cave we'll smoke you to death.

PHILOCTETES, *calling to Medon*. I can't help you! Medon, I can't help you!

ODYSSEUS, *shouting*. Kill him!

PHILOCTETES. No!

MEDON, *within*. Master!

PHILOCTETES. Don't kill him!

CHORUS. Kill!

DEMODOCUS. Kill Odysseus! (*Odysseus catches hold of Demodocus and uses him as a shield.*)

PHILOCTETES. I can't.

ODYSSEUS. Bring Medon out!

The guard carries out the body of Medon. Philoctetes cries out and with a mighty effort breaks the bow by smashing it against the wall of the cave. He leans over the body and dips one hand in blood. Thereupon, Odysseus surrenders Demodocus to a guard.

ODYSSEUS. And that's two.

PHILOCTETES. All's over and farewell. By the blood on this hand I will remember you. (*To Odysseus.*) And what will you do now? The bow is broken; the secret is in my brain. Force me back with you if you will; I'll never speak. And I will remain to see the broken body of every Greek lie before the gate of Troy, and yours too, Odysseus, but yours will be left to the dogs and the ants, and silence will bury you all.

ODYSSEUS. We'll not force you back with us, Philoctetes. Have it your way. I could do away with you now, but why? The Trojans won't come, their ship having vanished: and I will report you dead loud enough, a whisper of it will reach them too. I will report I saw you dead mysteriously among a crowd of Trojan corpses. They will put two and two together. Never, never will you see a human being again. You will stink to your own nostrils. Guards! Sack the cave. Destroy everything. (*Several guards enter the cave.*)

HALF CHORUS. All all alone.

OTHER HALF. Alone alone.

DEMODOCUS. Philoctetes . . .

PHILOCTETES. What.

DEMODOCUS. I pity you.

PHILOCTETES, *to Odysseus*. Release the boy, Odysseus. What does it matter to you now? Let him stay here.

ODYSSEUS, *loudly*. Break everything, men. Break!

CHORUS. All all alone alone alone alone. (*The flute is heard.*)

The guards appear.

FIRST GUARD. Everything's smashed.

SECOND GUARD. The body, sir?

ODYSSEUS. Take it inside—throw it on the heap. It will be stinking soon, stronger than Philoctetes himself. (*To the Chorus.*) Back to the ship, my friends.

FIRST SOLDIER. Without Philoctetes? Without the bow?

ODYSSEUS. Without Philoctetes, and the bow is broken.

SECOND SOLDIER. No pity on us, Philoctetes? THIRD. We who have to do the fighting? FOURTH. Without hope now. FIFTH. Our hands are clean; we did you no harm. SIXTH. You avenge yourself on all of us, the innocent. SEVENTH. The common soldier. EIGHTH. What have we got to do with oracles, higher strategy, new weapons, headquarters, military policy? NINTH. It is us you punish. TENTH. And our wives, our children, who don't even know you.

ODYSSEUS. Off with you, my friends. No more tears.

The chorus slowly leaves.

PHILOCTETES. Leave me Demodocus!

Odysseus signals to the guards. Demodocus is carried off. Odysseus sits down on the same stone as at the beginning of the scene. The litters with the dead men are taken away too. Only Odysseus and Philoctetes are left. Philoctetes is trembling.

ODYSSEUS. How quiet it is. Only the wind. And me, and you. Then I will go. *(He draws a dagger, rises and advances toward Philoctetes.)*

PHILOCTETES. You'll murder me? *(But Odysseus throws the dagger at Philoctetes' feet.)*

ODYSSEUS. When you've had enough of the island.

He turns and leaves. Philoctetes is left alone. He seems bewildered. He enters the cave, and comes out again, a broken man, holding a few scraps. He tries his voice by calling his own name, then Medon's. Total silence. Suddenly he flings himself toward the far end of the stage, where the Greeks left, and utters a wild cry.

PHILOCTETES. Take me! Odysseus! Take me! *(The drum beats hard. A guard appears.)* Take me! Take me! Take me! *(He is sobbing.)*

GUARD, off, shouting. Odysseus! Come back! Take him!

A VOICE, more distant. Take him!

Philoctetes lies on the ground. His sobs diminish. Heracles appears.

HERACLES. Philoctetes, rise, rise! I am Heracles. Be pacified. Rise! The serpent and the eagle shall unite. Troy shall fall. Glory to Greece! Glory to man!

Re-enter Odysseus and all the others, including the Chorus. All except Demodocus fall prostrate before Heracles.

HERACLES. Rise, Greeks, rise, most noble Odysseus. I give you this man, Philoctetes the Greek, to whom glory and a magnificent tribute in the hearts of men forever and forever. Philoctetes and Pyrrhus shall unite in the common task now and not only now but forever and forever, unbreakable league, wherever man shall live against man, city against city, nation against nation. Take his hand. Honor him. You have mastered him, but now acknowledge him your master. He cowers;

he is small and weak; his eyes are filmed with grief and fear: yet he is like a god among you; his thought will break the citadels.

ODYSSEUS, *to two of the guards.* You and you. Lead Philoctetes to the ship. Let him take my cabin there. Give him wine and meat. Have the sailors stand at attention. (*The guards and Philoctetes leave.*)

HERACLES, *pointing to Demodocus.* As for this man, release him, let him go safe, do not indict him before the Greeks. He is hardly real. Forget him altogether. (*At a signal from Odysseus, a guard unties Demodocus.*) Troy, barbarians, fall!

CHORUS. Fall! Fall!

Heracles leaves while the drum rolls. Then silence.

ODYSSEUS. Gentlemen, our mission is accomplished: not without difficulty, but accomplished, I believe, in a manner which will satisfy the high command. Demodocus, you are pardoned. I will leave you to the private obscurity of your shame, your petty emotions and your cherished Self, and not curb you to the prosecution you deserve. Philoctetes is ours, my friends. Now let the Trojans come and look for him! (*Demodocus raises his head in surprise.*)

FIRST SOLDIER. The Trojans? But you killed them!

ODYSSEUS. Nonsense. Those were not Trojans, but plain fishermen from Tenedos. I'm surprised you were fooled. We caught them sailing in a cockleshell, killed them, and dressed them up a little.

FIRST SOLDIER. But why?

ODYSSEUS. I foresaw, if not his resistance, at least the possibility of it. I planned to inform Philoctetes at a moment chosen by myself that the Trojans might come, then to exhibit these corpses, and impress on him the sense of his miserable abandonment. As it turned out, our colleague Demodocus told him for me.

FIRST SOLDIER. But then—master—

CHORUS. Master!

FIRST SOLDIER. Surely it was not your plan to leave Philoctetes behind after all, with the Trojans likely on their way even now! What if he had not cried out for us in the end?

ODYSSEUS. What do you think?

FIRST SOLDIER. I shudder at your cunning, Odysseus. Always in control, even when you are surprised. I will never admit that Philoctetes is an intelligent man, in spite of his inventions.

ODYSSEUS. The intelligent man is not always the smart man. No gloating. Let us be soberly satisfied.

FIRST SOLDIER. Not you, Odysseus, you can congratulate yourself more than soberly. How fine it must be to look on your own handiwork, and say, in a moment of passion, "Well done!"

ODYSSEUS, *shrugging*. I stand up to my shoulders in dung and blood. Come, gentlemen, away. Demodocus, ready?

DEMODOCUS. Leave me here.

ODYSSEUS. Leave you here?

DEMODOCUS. Yes.

ODYSSEUS. Alone?

DEMODOCUS. Yes.

SECOND SOLDIER. Demodocus, don't be a child. Come with us. THIRD. No one will remind you of anything. FOURTH. Your place is still your place at camp. FIFTH. And in Ithaca. Do we speak for you, Odysseus?

ODYSSEUS. By all means.

DEMODOCUS. Leave me here. Give me some clothes, a few knives, tools, anything you can or will. Leave me here.

ODYSSEUS. What shall we do, my friends? For myself, frankly, I don't care. Let him do as he pleases. Demodocus, when the tide rises and the ship floats free, we raise anchor and sail. Come if you wish, stay if you wish. You are too small for my worry. (*He leaves.*)

THE CHORUS SPEAKS *with harp*

FIRST SOLDIER. As a man older than you and more experienced by far, I will speak freely with you, Demodocus, and call you a coward. You will tell us that you despise the world, that you abhor mankind, that you condemn life, or perhaps stand—what do I know?—away from it—above it—beside it—SECOND. All which are words suitable to a poet. FIRST. But in reality you fear the world. SECOND. Your decision is not strength, but spite; not courage, but shame.

THIRD SOLDIER. And the cheering fire in the house? The open door, the embrace? "You've come back to us," they cry. They take off your cloak, they bathe your feet, they offer you wine and honey, they cry and fuss over you.

FOURTH SOLDIER. Human beings. FIFTH. Others. SIXTH. Yet yours, your own. SEVENTH. Invisible strings between you and them.

EIGHTH SOLDIER. Once long ago I quarreled bitterly with my father because he loved my brothers, but me he neglected and even starved; sometimes he beat me; he called me a vagabond. And I left the house; I went to Corinth; I lived alone among strangers. At night I heard the voices next door to mine; I saw the people in the street: families, or lovers, or friends, or polite acquaintances—I envied them all, even the man who patted a dog; and now and then I saw a man alone, like myself, and that man always wore the same expression as mine, a calculated air of indifference to conceal his despair. He looks around and seems to say, "Me? I am alone only for the moment! I am expecting

a gay crowd of friends. Don't worry about me, I beg you." But inside he cries. He goes home and stares at the wall opposite his chair. He eats an apple. He writes a letter. He mends a stocking. And he sits again and stares. Soon he begins to talk to himself. Then he stops, because he is ashamed. What will he do? He is not tired. What can he do? He paces the floor, lifts a vase from a shelf, places it on a table, he doesn't know why, and sits down again. All he wants now is to see a human being. He knows one at the far end of the city. But this man has a wife and two small children, and it would be a disturbance to knock at his door. What could he say? What excuse would he have for the visit? He could say, "Excuse me, but I came to borrow the hand-saw you promised me." Perhaps the wife would ask him to come in and share their meal. But probably she would not. He would even say, if she invited him, "Thank you but I must hurry, I have an appointment," lest they ridicule him with pity; and he would go home again, and sit, and stare, and suffer. Oh Demodocus, believe me, I returned home again; the first friend I met on the street I kissed; he thought I was mad.

NINTH SOLDIER. And the war, for that matter, is that so bad after all? EIGHTH. No! Better this war all my life, and to lose both my arms, than another month of loneliness. TENTH. A comrade keeps you warm too. FIFTH. In the heat of battle you hear and see your platoon about you. THIRD. At night you roar out a song together. FOURTH. You share a bottle. FOURTH. And a story. SECOND. And a woman. SIXTH. Show me a good brawler and I'll show you a reliable friend. SEVENTH. The worst kind is the man who has no enemies. He has no friends either. THIRD. Cold blood. SECOND. Sitting in a corner.

NINTH SOLDIER. He doesn't know it, but if you left him alone on an island, he would clamor for you, though he acted as though he didn't even know your name.

EIGHTH SOLDIER. Yes, it's easy to look self-sufficient when you're in good company.

FIRST SOLDIER. Demodocus, listen! Come with us. It's too horrible. Who will you sing to when you're alone? You will lose the desire to sing. You will lose count of time. Your beard and your hair will cover your face. You will babble at random and finally lose your language. You will crouch on all fours like a beast. Who knows? God, who knows, you will fornicate with an animal, and beget a monster. Demodocus, live among men. Even hate is better than solitude. The universe is morose, the gods ignore the simple people we are; everywhere you look the stars drive insanely in the dense cavern, and we, we few, we poor few should huddle here and hold each others' hands and say good-bye to the dying, and kiss their lips with a last warmth. But you will die alone, growling vacantly, your head on a stone, and the wild pigs will eat you.

Silence.

TENTH SOLDIER. He won't say a word.

NINTH SOLDIER. And for whom will you sing now? How will you sing without us who are the listeners? You led us into times before our silly births, and into regions we had never seen. Fables, facts? We didn't care; under your persuasion we sat still and yet we travelled; we were ourselves and yet we became others; our lives multiplied; wisdoms not our own became ours; I, poor nobody, because of you I was Oedipus, Theseus, even Prometheus, even Zeus himself while your song kept itself singing. Such is your power over us.

Silence.

A VOICE, *in the distance.* Men! The tide is rising, hurry up!

FIRST SOLDIER. The tide is rising. Friends, come away. Only this Demodocus, if you came running after us, and caught the rope-ladder while the ship moved away, you might make a shabby or a laughable figure. Many a fool will die rather than cut a shabby or laughable figure. Don't be a fool.

The chorus slowly leave.

EIGHTH SOLDIER. Poor man; I can't bear it.

All are gone. The music ceases.

DEMODOCUS. Now let the men and the gods chuckle. Erased from the records of the city and the temple, only then will I be a man again. I hate the gods. How long will I survive? Will I go mad? But here the air is clean. And I? Free. Innocent. Not rising, not sinking. Dumb as the laurel, still as a comet, clean as a drop of rain, patient as the rock, motionless as a dead lake, peaceful as the dust. I will hear only me. Maybe I will stop singing, being perfect. I will be reticent. I will listen to the sea's liquid speech, not one hypocrite among all its syllable waves. Let the moon lift the sea to my feet, but not drown me yet. Philoctetes, your arrows will tear up Troy, but to me the seagull will report only the old news: the fish singing in the sea, innocently devouring, innocently devoured. Peace. And then dying will not seem hard. So. To begin, Demodocus must bury a man.

He vanishes into the cave. The harp is plucked a few times, diminishes. The music ends.

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Bink Noll

OBLIQUITY ON DEATH

It was the usual hour
To leave my work
But no time at all
Because that sudden light
Like unexpected wings
Curled the air warmly
Into points of wind.
And the disturbed air
Itself suggested light
Or birds or leaping
Till winter clearly died
In the possibility of rain.
This was a promise on the skin.
In that assertive light
The great elms honored
All their vows of summer.
A whole world of crystals
Was bound to liquefaction
And to leave light absolute.
So I floated home
Not at all as usual
To announce this to my wife.

Charles Philbrick

LILAC: OUTDOORS IN

Quatrefoils fading from purple
Are bunched like great noses,
Full-veined and fat-damsoned,
Of folk from crumbling Olympus;
These are the last fruit of Hebe,
And Ganymede's bequest.

This glory

Will die into summer, and lilac
Give way to its leaves, all purple
Confounded in sun-sucking green.

But now, in this evening, as quiet
As noise in the loudest of places,
Cut lilacs command the dim light
That dwindles in this living-room.

Harold T. McCarthy

The Zeiss House

ONCE THEY HAD TURNED off the highway and left the Sunday traffic behind, the Asburys glanced about them and decided it really was beginning to look like autumn in the country. Carl, who was driving, lit a cigarette and began talking about the Zeiss house once more. Helen adjusted a window so as to deflect the air-stream onto her face. She studied the sky for a while and decided the clearness would last until evening. A fragment of song danced through her mind, and she started to hum the melody.

"You're not listening to a word I'm saying," her husband crossly interrupted.

"I am too," Helen countered. "You were saying something about the kind of wood." Then she added, "I think it's much brighter now," and looked, as though for the first time, at the sky and at the woods and fields that were passing by.

"And that draft is bad for the baby."

Helen twirled the window shut and turned to look at the baby who was in a basinette suspended above the rear seat. The baby was sound asleep, its hands clenched into tiny fists, and a half-empty bottle thrust to one side. Helen removed the bottle and carefully poked the pale blue blanket into order.

When she had settled in the seat, Carl began to talk once more of the kind of wood used in the Zeiss house, but Helen was aware of her attention being drawn, almost as through a kind of hypnosis, to the passing scene. Her husband's voice became more and more distant, undistinguishable at last from the hum

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of the car's motor. Carl Asbury thought he was getting his point across until they passed an explosion of scarlet, and Helen exclaimed, "Carl, will you *look* at that maple!"

He stopped speaking and pointedly ignored the trees.

"Sorry," said Helen; after a righteous pause, her husband leaned over swiftly and kissed her upon the ear. They passed a white farmhouse, set well back from the road. In the field beyond it, two little boys and a little girl were trying to catch a chestnut pony. As they sped over the pasture, their bright-colored jackets flapped wildly, and the little girl's hair streamed like an orange flame behind her. To Helen, who watched them with love, they seemed like three released balloons.

Recalled by her husband's silence once more, Helen felt a brief misgiving. He took his architectural work with the utmost seriousness, and this visit to the Zeiss house, she reminded herself, was a kind of pilgrimage for him. But though she tried to share his earnestness, she was not successful for very long. The road, winding through New England countryside, offered too much brilliance. Wayside stands, like cornucopias, disgorged a tumbled abundance of pumpkins, cider and chrysanthemums. Ponds, incredibly still, held the sky with intensified blue. The stubble in the fields shone golden; even the woodlands receded in translucent mazes of yellow and green.

Finally the car came to a stop beside a new mailbox. "Zeiss," Carl read. They turned off the road onto a driveway that swirled upward through bushy walls of hemlock. Then, unexpectedly, it emerged from the hemlock upon a clear sweep of hillside at the crest of which could be seen the celebrated Zeiss house, only a few seasons old, and already established as a classic of contemporary design.

To Helen it hardly seemed a house at all. It was more like a slight disorder of wood and stone thrusting itself above the thin turf. As they drew closer, the form emerged more definitely, became a pattern of angles and planes, almost as if the whole thing were a trick of the light and might abruptly resolve itself once more into the materials and colors of the hill-

The Zeiss House

side. Despite the many pictures and diagrams, Helen felt she had not been prepared for this. Confronted with the achieved thing, she felt sharply her own inadequacy, as though it were a measure of her own meager ability to imagine and create. She sat carefully erect and, as though trying to occupy as little space as possible, pressed her knees together and held her hands clasped on her lap.

While Carl went to ring the doorbell, Helen attended to the baby. The car had been parked in a sunny spot, sheltered from the wind; and since the weather was mild, she decided to leave the baby in the basinette. When she joined her husband, he was still standing outside the front door of the house. His finger pressed firmly against the button, and they could hear a dissonant chime shiver through the house. The roof's soaring overhang held them in its shadow, and Helen's eyes leapt nervously along the fragile clerestories that somehow kept it from winging into space. Carl frowned impatiently, his heavy eyebrows knitting together.

"Odd they don't answer," he said and again sent the silver half-tone wandering through the house.

"Does it really matter if they aren't here?" Helen asked timidly. "After all, the house is what you wanted to see, and there's almost nothing, inside or out, that you can't see from—"

"That's just the point," he broke in. "Unless you meet the people for whom this house was designed, you can't 'see' the house."

Here it comes, she thought, chapter and verse.

"The collective personality of the family for whom a house is designed, in this case the Zeiss family, should serve as the organizing principle . . ."

"Halloo!"

The Asburys looked up, startled, in the direction of this call and saw a woman emerging from the woods. She was tall, and came directly towards them with long, purposeful strides. Her face was deeply tanned and her coarse hair was drawn tightly into a large knot that rode on the nape of her neck. She wore a man's red mackinaw and a long skirt of heavy tweed.

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"You're Mr. Asbury," she announced. "Glad you could come."

"This is my wife, Helen," Carl said.

As they met, Helen felt Mrs. Zeiss's keen, hazel eyes sweep over her intently and then turn completely away. Mrs. Zeiss paused to scrape the mud from her battered shoes, and then, with a backward glance that searched the hillside, ushered her guests into the house. Her hoarse voice apologized, "I'm sorry I wasn't here to meet you, but everything has gone wrong today."

"I hope we haven't inconvenienced you," Carl said.

"Certainly not. We've been looking forward to meeting you ever since Stoller wrote to us. He says you're the bright young man of his office." Mrs. Zeiss's lips smiled briefly and then drew taut again, as though the smile had been a violation. Helen saw a flush of pleasure cross her husband's face.

"Mr. Stoller still considers this house the finest thing he's done," Carl observed.

"We're satisfied with it," Mrs. Zeiss replied, as though further praise were pointless. She indicated some chairs and said, "I'll tell Mr. Zeiss that you're here." Noting the look of surprise on Carl's face, she added, "He wouldn't have heard you ring. His study is soundproof—remember?"

When she had gone, Carl prowled about, examining the structure. Helen cautiously settled in a chair as though she distrusted the slender rods and gossamer fabric that were expected to support her. Light flooded through an enormous window and glittered upon a section of granite ledge that had been sheared smooth to form an inner wall. A raised hearth projected from this wall, and a grey cylinder rose above the hearth to the reddish boards and rafters of the roof. Helen found the extraordinary spaces unsettling, and so she fixed her attention upon the altar-like hearth, where a fire had been precisely laid. No one, she observed, had seen fit to light it for some time. Dust had gathered in the crevices of the fluted paper at its base.

Somewhere outside, a bird repeated the same brief song with such piercing clarity that Helen listened, in the stillness that

The Zeiss House

followed, to hear if her baby would cry. Reassured by the continuing silence, she gazed out the huge window. It was like looking from the mouth of a mountain cave. The gentle hillsides stretched away before her, brightened by the gilt and russet transparencies of fall. No road, no house could be seen; but for two distant water towers, it might have been the earth six days old.

Mrs. Zeiss reappeared with her husband. He was at least a foot shorter than she and so gaunt that the crumpled linen smock he wore suggested an untidy shroud. He planted himself in front of Carl and stared, without speaking, up into his face. Carl began to say how pleased he and his wife had been to receive the invitation to visit the Zeisses, but before the social phrases had gone very far, they sounded too banal to be uttered. Mr. Zeiss's eyes, unblinking, watched him with the dispassionate appraisal they might have bestowed upon a test tube. Finally, he interrupted him with a series of questions. When these were finished, he ominously clucked two or three times and then appeared to smile. He turned to his wife, who had drifted over to a doorway and stood there as though listening for someone to call.

"Clara," he shouted, "where are those martinis?"

Mrs. Zeiss sent one last searching glance along the hillside, and then turned back to the room and mechanically set about preparing cocktails as though her mind was still peering into the darkness at the edge of the wood.

"No sign of him at all?" Mr. Zeiss inquired.

Mrs. Zeiss shook her head slowly from side to side.

"S'damn strange," he said. "Been gone a full twenty-four hours." Mr. Zeiss lifted his eyebrows in casual speculation. "Could be some hunter. . ."

Mrs. Zeiss, who had been slowly rotating a shaker, winced sharply and set it down on a table. Mr. Zeiss watched her a moment, and when she remained still, he walked over to the table and poured the drinks with quick precision.

"Cheer up, cheer up," he said heartily. "He'll turn up. Just wait till he gets hungry enough. I've never known it to fail."

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"Is somebody missing?" Carl asked.

Mr. Zeiss went nimbly about the room delivering the cocktails and replied, "Oh no, really nothing at all. Tommy has disappeared."

Mrs. Zeiss had wandered back to the doorway and stood, as before, as though she were waiting for someone to call.

"But who is Tommy?" Carl persisted.

"It's only the dog," Mr. Zeiss chuckled. "Don't be disturbed."

Carl smiled his relief and was about to say something when he was stopped by a sharp, warning glance from Helen. What can be wrong, he wondered. But in a moment Mr. Zeiss was talking rapidly about the house, and he gave the matter no further thought. Mr. Zeiss talked spiritedly of how he and his wife found existence both simplified and enriched, thanks to careful architectural planning. He cited figures to emphasize how much more productive both he and his wife had become.

Mrs. Zeiss had moved back into the room. As she settled beside the unlighted fire, Helen noticed that her legs had been badly scratched by briars. Now Mr. Zeiss was talking of how the human personality needed to find expression in terms of wood, stone, glass and steel. Helen caught herself watching the others listen, rather than listening herself, and this dismayed her. But the phrases—how cold they sounded. The disposition of space, someone said. An orientation of lines. Pure. Helen bit into a fat, black olive and pressed the smooth oil from the fruit between her lips. Glancing uneasily over the masses disposed before her, following with her eyes the lines of flow, gauging the pureness, she wondered what these things might tell her about Mrs. Zeiss, whose personality appeared to be so alien to her own. But the house yielded so many possibilities that she gave up speculating on the subject and, as though to restore her balance, let her eyes rest once more upon the geometry of sticks and paper upon the hearth. The skilled voices continued, no longer bothering to turn with politeness in her direction. The tense rhythm of angles and planes, the textures of wood and

The Zeiss House

stone, all compelled her admiration; but she received it as a disembodied beauty—what did it lead to, she wondered.

During a pause in the conversation, a faint cry was heard outside. Mrs. Zeiss, on her feet instantly, rushed out the door. The men looked after her with surprise, and Helen got up, remarking, "It's just the baby. He must have awakened. I'll give him his bottle."

When Helen went outside, the baby was bawling from the car, and Mrs. Zeiss, who had rushed to the edge of the clearing, was looking back in bewilderment.

"It's Jimmy," Helen called to her. "He's decided he's hungry."

"Oh, you have a baby. I thought it must be Tommy."

Helen lifted the baby out of the back seat and said, "Would you mind taking him for a moment? I've got to get out his milk and bottle from in back here." She fumbled in a blanket on the further side of the seat and produced a cloth bag that contained the articles she wanted.

"Are you sure he's all right?" Mrs. Zeiss inquired nervously. She had the baby in the crook of her elbow, rocking him vigorously, but the baby stared at her wide-eyed and continued to wail.

"Oh, yes. He's not used to you. Here, let me have him." The baby was transferred and the wailing decreased to a quiet splutter.

"Now if I may heat his milk, he won't give us any more trouble. He's a very good-natured baby."

Mrs. Zeiss hurried toward the kitchen as though it were a matter of the gravest importance. There, she fussed expertly with a set of dials and soon had the milk heated to exactly the right temperature. When the women returned to the living room, Mr. Zeiss looked across at the child and observed, "So that's what the racket was all about!"

Helen Asbury settled herself in a chair and Mrs. Zeiss stood beside her, looking down at the baby in admiration.

"And you say he's only seven months," she said, a tone of wonder lifting her words.

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Helen mopped the baby's chin so that he might show to better advantage. Mrs. Zeiss reached out tentatively and brushed her fingers across his cheek. At the opposite side of the room, the men looked toward her expectantly.

"I was just saying to Mr. Asbury that it sounded too wild to be Tommy," Mr. Zeiss said and smiled broadly. Apparently Mrs. Zeiss didn't hear him. She was absorbed in watching the baby's fist close about one of her fingers.

"See," she exclaimed. "He isn't afraid of me now."

"We, ah, we were just going into the matter of insulation, Clara," said Mr. Zeiss in a flat, impatient tone.

Mrs. Zeiss straightened up at once. "Do you think there's a chill in the room?" she asked Helen and looked searchingly about as though the chill might be found lurking in a corner or hiding behind a chair.

"What we need is a fire," she announced and with a click of her cigarette lighter ignited the paper and wood already arranged upon the hearth. For a few seconds it smouldered uncertainly, then a wisp of smoke curled towards the cylinder suspended above, and the kindling began to crackle properly.

Regarding the blaze with satisfaction, Mrs. Zeiss said, "I don't know how long it's been since we've had a fire."

"About the insulation," Mr. Zeiss interrupted with a trace of impatience in his voice. When his wife did not respond, he added, "I think perhaps we'd best leave the women here and go take a look at it."

"Right," said Carl, and the two men departed. From time to time Helen caught a glimpse of them passing outside or heard their voices coming from a distant part of the house. Mrs. Zeiss stood silently beside the fire watching her.

"Would you like to hold him for a while?" Helen asked.

Mrs. Zeiss took the baby in her arms, and the two women sat talking quietly by the fire. Mrs. Zeiss began to hum a tune she had heard Helen humming. The firelight illumined the red folds of her shirt and softened the contours of her face to a long oval. Once more Helen's eyes examined the extraordinary room, but this time she sensed a completion as her eyes were led in-

The Zeiss House

exorably to Mrs. Zeiss and the hearth. The harsh angles and tilted planes resolved there like so many minor progressions flowing into a final harmony.

As she watched, the brief fire tumbled in upon itself and glowed with a redness only slightly brighter than the brick hearth. Two long, parallel shadows crossed and re-crossed the room as the men passed outside the enormous window, treading carefully between the clumps of *ilex* and *peiris japonica*. They were absorbed in a question of angles—how to get the maximum light and warmth from a winter sun. Finally they returned, for it was time to leave. Mrs. Zeiss rose from her place by the hearth and brought the baby to Helen. Saying good-bye, she leaned over and kissed his forehead that had paled with sleep.

At the foot of the steeply sloping driveway, before disappearing between the rows of hemlock, the Asburys paused for a backward look. In the thick late-afternoon shadows the house seemed like an outcropping of stone marked here and there by patches of darker stone. The enormous window was now, indeed, like the mouth of a cave. Mr. Zeiss had vanished inside, but Mrs. Zeiss had advanced to the edge of the woods. Helen saw her pause, lean steeply forward, and with her hand raised to her lips call into the matted darkness. The car windows were closed against the chill evening air, and so she could not hear the call.

They turned down the drive through the hemlock and passed on to the lonely twisting road. Helen turned a pair of gloves over and over in her hands. Once she asked, irrelevantly, "Do you suppose Tommy will ever come back?"

"Tommy?"

"The dog."

"Oh, I don't know."

Helen fixed her eyes on the stream of headlights coming from the city and tried to shut out of her mind the call she imagined to be floating, silent as moonlight, over the hillside, falling with the dead leaves even to the sheltered hollows among the stones.

Robert G. Tucker

A WAY OF LOOKING

i

I watch within this room and from this chair
Freight cars rolling left within the frame
Of window and a building at their right
Till left goes the caboose, and then no more.
No more, but now I see the world go right;
The hill, the highway, river, tree, and all
Go right. They move as slowly as the freight
In opposite direction—as though I
By watching that train's motion now must move
At its rate toward its station in my chair.
Oh, I can stop illusion when I will,
Confine my looking to the room, the book.
And then if nothing's moving I can see
In room or book, I've found a thing to do,
For move it surely can, my point of view.

ii

Whole galaxies appear to drift away.
Even small illusions—Dippers, Bears—
At harbor here, will show us parting flares,
Unless a way of looking makes them stay.

TURNING TIDE

Ocean once made mind
The dory that I rowed
In whose stern my son
Could see ahead as I behind.
Our tributary flowed
Into the deeper river he saw run

Under a bridge and outward to the sea.
The cooler air! I turned and saw us drawn
By turning tide
And thought to drift, though—out—I shouldn't be
Strong enough to save our being gone
As long as ocean's pulsing should decide.

A great rock on the bank moved to the rear,
A lobster buoy bobbed past,
The boat drove at the bridge where, spilling froth,
A wave writhed up each pier;
The flow between, green-black, cold, and fast,
Insistent, drew the dory as light a moth—

And when I said, No more,
It was all that I could do to pull to shore.

IMAGINE BEAST-WINGS

Not me, I tried to say. Not me, but you.
And said it ill; a vain man speaks within it,
Waiting applause: proud as though he'd win it.
But something in me means to say it true.
There's a love, I want to say, that's new,
Fresh forever, surging through each minute,
Through foot and yard abstractions we make in it:
That's the love a vain man tells askew.

An owl can hold a tree and outglare snow,
Then gather itself in flight and sweep northeast
Over the elms, the brook, across the fields.
Fresh forever, that love.

Words I know
Are vain unless they mean, Imagine Beast-
Wings, a power to choose what that love yields.

PRAYER

Nourish, where slowly it wakes, a strong seed.
Advance the urgent massing in the core,
The dark vigor groping, unhusking.
At the burst be. Be to the first sure,
To the second shoot, the third, sure. Choose,
Love, root's will to sink root,
Sprout's to lift sprout. No filament fail.
Though heaven spill, let bud compose
Stalk and twig, trunk, branches, the panoply.
Foster bloom-savor, the full fruit,
Mist-smoke, fleck, rose-cheek. Bear
In my touch gleam, to my eyes form.
When teeth tear the taut skin,
Salvage a strong seed. Arise, descend to my taste.

THE ONE WORD

The vocabulary of love
Begins with fugues of light
And sense of textures.
Then, increase:
Fragrance of leaves,
Violet, lilac, wild-grape,
The taste of springs, a raindrop,
Snow, an apple.
Held in the heart,
These treasures live,
While touch learns granite, velvet;
The ear: claxons, cannon;
Taste seeks gases, beeves, whole lambs;
Sight finds beggars; and nostrils
Learn vast poverties, wounds.
And what diction, idiom to use
To tell how love can heal,
Can sing encyclopedias of enormity
To sense? As if love were the one word,
The perfect root,
Whose fugues were all, were all.

Sanchia Thayer

Personality and Moral Leadership: Operations of the Political Mind

IT IS THE DISTINCTION of the greatest among the leaders of men that they are, in their complexity, subject to criticism for the immoral implications of acts highly moral in nature. By the fruits of these acts they are to be known, when the more obvious of the circumstances evoking leadership have failed to simplify our assessments of them. Yet, as the recent administration drew to its undistinguished close, we knew that Dwight Eisenhower had not been a leader of this order. Shorn of their illusions about the individual who had captured their imagination at Geneva, a people watched him as indifferently as he responded to events. They sensed, as he sensed, that whether he had or had not set his foot upon the shores of Japan could make no appreciable difference in that ultimate estimate history would accord him. Quiescently they reflected upon the virtues in the Presidential visits to twenty-seven nations, as elaborated in a national address. Sympathetically they celebrated the symbol of their hopes, as he advocated the election of a member of his party: and elected another man. Divided though they were, they shared the knowledge that the maintenance of the peace had not been enough. For behind the visit to Portugal, wreathed now in the mists of irrelevant campaign oratory, loomed the Summit Conference of 1960. At a moment that was to undo the unprecedented progress Russian-American relations had evidenced in recent years, President Eisenhower had found himself unable to offer regrets to Premier Khrushchev, on America's behalf, for the effects upon the Russian people of America's

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violation of international law. And China, and the Russian army, and Khrushchev's supposed insecurity all burgeoned as hypothetical reasons for a significant failure which will one day be seen as originating in the personality of a man without the capacity for distinguishing the demands of statesmanship from the demands his personality made upon him.

Neither the virtues nor the serious deficiencies to which these events testify are suggestive of the impact this President has had upon his people, however. For that we must turn back to the year of another presidential election, one in which the genuinely compelling effects of his personality were to leave their mark on the national scene. Not every political theorist would concede that the incidents which will concern us deserve examination in a period of relative political calm. But they afford us a signal advantage: we may deal with them as if they were fiction. Because of the complexity of affairs of state, it is seldom that we are able to evaluate the thinking of a President during the years of his administration. Yet this particular election precipitated a major issue, and one which highlights the judgment of a single individual. Normally any President is at the center of a network of events, so that the interrelationship of many details we have no access to, and the temporal course of his interaction with others remain hidden from us; cause becomes indistinguishable from effect. But the political episodes on which we focus formed a sequence of events brought step by step in their implicit causality to some kind of resolution; thus they illuminate the way in which this man realized himself amid events.

Here is our vantage point for assessing the personality of the individual whom we are now called upon to judge. Eisenhower's personality derives its very great interest from the fact that it had up to this time been without particular definition in the sphere of politics: one had the impression, in the normal course of events, of a warm and magnanimous simplicity stemming from, yet somehow transfiguring, the lesser, rather ordinary, human graces. The striking result, at occasional crucial

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junctures like Geneva, was the rare and luminous sincerity which tended to obscure the cold practical facts of politics, in whose manipulation the President was so little versed. And if we are to assume that personality is defined by the event, it may be significant that what had promised so much remained precisely as it was, unproven by the office which is normally the great testing ground. Dignity, sincerity, loyalty, selflessness and an essential goodness were his; but they persisted untested and without modification by the particular event. As such they seldom manifested themselves as moral and spiritual resources. Rather it was respect for the good things—for dignity, for harmony, for freedom, for democracy—which was the source of his goodness.

Yet the very subtlety of these distinctions is an index to the problematic nature of morality in government, as it was symbolized by President Eisenhower. In making them too forcibly we are dissatisfied, sensing that we are dealing with something infinitely grave in its implications. For surely the quality of good will with which Mr. Eisenhower had impressed men as dissimilar as Taft and Khrushchev had been extraordinary. And if the tendencies giving rise to our fitful impressions of a potential ultimately to dissipate itself did not become fixed as attributes, there is some evidence to suggest that the loss was not irretrievable until the exceptional circumstances to which we turn became a determinant for this personality. The question that arises is what happens to the quality of personality, when subjected to the workings of political pressure, if it is not allied with the high degree of intelligence which moral leadership demands.

The events which were gradually to define the personality for us were simple enough. In the spring of 1956, some five months after suffering a heart attack whose effects were as uncertain as the world of medicine normally finds them, Dwight D. Eisenhower announced his decision to run for a second term as President of the United States. The possibility that a decision affecting the nation and the world had been determined by the subtler effects of party loyalties upon a genuine attempt

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to consider the welfare of the nation remained just that—a possibility, and debatable as such. Early in the summer of the same year Mr. Eisenhower was operated on for ileitis, a disease whose statistics provide even more questionable grounds for predictions. The President accepted this distressing situation with his customary fortitude, and his decision remained unaffected by it. The event did have a distinct and sobering effect on press and public, however, sharpening the issue inherent in the original decision: one which was again not to be succinctly stated.

The issue was not a catalogue of the number of operations to which the Republican and Democratic candidates could lay claim; and we made a mockery of the most influential office in the world in supposing this was so. The issue was not whether Roosevelt's health was equally in question towards the end of his third term of office, or, conversely, whether war justified his decision to seek that office once more. For the nation, and the man himself very probably, had had no such clear warnings as those which in this instance confronted us with a crucial problem in the history of American institutions. The issue was not that the doctors could tell Mr. Eisenhower he had a good chance for survival, or that the politicians could tell him, as he privately admitted they did, that the party had no one else. The issue was that the President's decision can be interpreted as a willingness to let the country gamble on his ability to sustain office for another four years, in the interests of prolonging his policies and the tenure of his party in office. It is true that every life is a gamble; and that the private citizen, as well as the head of a private business, has every right to gamble as he chooses. Admittedly men live full lives after heart attacks; admittedly disease strikes other and younger men unexpectedly; admittedly ileitis may not recur or may only incapacitate a man temporarily. Yet with the increase of the expectancy of seizure, the reliance on chance assumed a magnitude it had never before had in an election year. Should the President have been stricken again, his successor would then have been a man whom the electorate would assuredly not have voted into the

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highest office in the land. The President's personality would have opened that office to him. And for the first time a representative of the highest office in the land would have been liable to the charge that he had attempted to make it a succession by inheritance. It is testimony to the deep respect in which Mr. Eisenhower was held by members of all parties that the moral considerations raised by his approach to the matter were not explicitly to be broached.

These began to be apparent in a press conference held during the second illness in order that the consulting specialists might clarify the President's condition for the nation. And if Howard Rutstein felt impelled thereafter to formulate the ethics of the medical profession, his article in the *Atlantic Monthly* accomplished a good deal more. It forced us to fix the responsibility for the position in which all medical commentators had been placed. The discussion of professional ethics inevitably reminded us that in the historical perspective the President's decision will finally clarify itself as a moral, rather than a medical, problem. Because the responsibility for resolving the issue lay with the President, rather than with his doctors, nothing raises more surely for us the difficulties simple goodness faces in dealing with complex moral problems under political pressure. For the President had dealt with the matter humbly, in what he conceived as the democratic way. But the problem is one which gives us the measure of a man, rather than a group of men, whether a group of doctors, a group of party members assembled at a dinner to give their opinion, or the masses of the voters.

Any attempt to reconcile this statement of the central issue in the campaign of 1956 with the nature of the man who could not conceive it as the central issue will at least resolve our confusions about the chaotic and misleading results of the earnestness of both doctors and President in a situation which should never have arisen. It was a response to the conflict between political pressure and the moral intuition which resulted in attempts at prediction. In no other situation would a group of doctors, struggling competently to improve the life expectancy

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of a man beloved by the world, be subjected to such merciless and persistent questioning, and before they were prepared to demonstrate the kind of verbal precision which alone can clarify for mankind the problems it faces. And though we can look back now and see their errors, we can look back also to the ultimate error.

It recurred in the press conferences: the President's remarks about his running developed a singular tone, one which we find in few statements made by public individuals on such a matter. The press conference became a stage which betrayed the drift of his private thinking, rather than his convictions. He commented—thoughtfully, a reporter told us—that it was “not too important for the individual how he ends up.” He gave us a simile to explain his admission that even at the worst period of his second illness it never occurred to him there was any renewed question about his running: as in the Battle of the Bulge, he had no fears about the outcome until he read the American newspapers. Yet the attitude that the fate of the Presidency demands in such a situation is quite distinct from the simple courage that can proceed with battles to be fought, regardless of the consequences. In this case others should not have had to raise the doubts and fears. The Presidency demands an incisive awareness of the larger implications of the death of any incumbent. It is of the utmost importance to the people of America and of the world how their governing President “ends up” during the four years of his term. Only when that term is ended and he is a private citizen again can he be permitted the freedom and the courage to discount the dangers of his death. Ironically enough, in this instance such personal virtues were a luxury.

At the national and international level, then, what is the highest kind of morality for the private citizen represents an instance of political immorality. And we had the uneasy sense that the cleavage between the moral and the political progressed amid the events which concern us. For the tone of the editorials which greeted Mr. Eisenhower's original announcement of his running had been strangely disquieting. Neither the vibrant

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enthusiasm which bespeaks a people's intuitive sense of the fitness of things at climactic moments nor the vital argumentation betraying its sense that something significant has transpired was in evidence. Nothing testifies more clearly to that cleavage than the peculiar editorial page appearing in a July issue of *Life Magazine*, the issue which also carried the second announcement of the candidacy. The double editorial on two aspects of "The U. S. Spirit" was subtly calculated to suggest a moral sanction for gambles great as well as small, reflecting popular approval of this questionable attitude toward the highest office in the land. "The Moral Creed" and "The Will to Risk" live happily together, if we do not examine where the line is to be drawn. "I may possibly be a greater risk than is the normal person of my age," the President had said on February 29th of the election year, ignoring the fact that no one of his age had ever lived out another term. "My doctors assure me that this increased percentage of risk is not great." But by the time the risk was doubled, events had dismissed from his mind both increased percentages and a previously stated intention of considering carefully anything more serious than a bout of influenza. Only infrequently did the situation color his thinking. Ironically no president we have had would have regretted more than President Eisenhower the possibility to which his own words, in the press conference held at the beginning of August, testified: that unable as he was himself to say his running was best for the country, unconsciously he had placed his party before his nation.

So it is that we relive his opening statement in the first television address with the dramatic immediacy of the present. No consideration of risk urges itself upon him now: for this is what the mind does with the ideas on which it has not properly focussed. Yet with a mind less shallow, if less sharp, than some of the fortune-happy syndicates which back him, he feels what he cannot formulate; and we watch him amid the overtones which suggest he could never in any conscience urge a risk upon the voters. Moving as he is into the phase of the campaign which demands conviction of him, he adopts a position that is

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morally indefensible. He ascribes to the mercy of God the peace which this personal matter—the assurance that he can physically sustain the burden of the office longer than any individual in the history of our nation has been able to do—has brought him. What is simply an opinion formed in defiance of the laws of human probability, whether or not it is later confirmed, has become by September of the election year “a firm conviction.” As a means of silencing a discussion which ought to have taken place, the statement is an effective one: we sympathize with the universal confusion which gives rise to such convictions. But it is also the climax to one of the absorbing chapters in our current political history.

In assigning to God the responsibility which he learned could not rest with his doctors, Eisenhower gave evidence of that weakening of the moral intuition which was to characterize his administration in the years to follow. In any other man this reassurance to the electorate would have caused us a profound moral shock. About this man we had to think twice. We knew that it was, as reassurance, the ironic fruit of a deeply moral nature. But the fact remains that even the unconscious acceptance of himself as a man of destiny divinely protected must be censored in any man who evades the responsibility for his major decisions, and thus for imposing his will on the people. And in the context of drifting personal utterances we have examined, there was occasional evidence of the origin of all such evasions. When the possibility that he had not given reconsideration to so weighty a decision seemed to disconcert his questioners, Mr. Eisenhower was known to make his characteristic statement to the press that he was not going to talk about the matter any more. Thinking had stopped; it was not to be resumed.

The portrait that had developed, fragmentarily but consistently, was the portrait of a man to whom serious thinking is alien enough that the making of a decision inhibits, when it does not forestall, any ability to review the decision in the light of new evidence. This does not mean that the decision to run for office should inevitably have been revoked. Instead it means that the thinking in which decision issues has the power to de-

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termine the morality of the decision, as in this instance the pressure for renewed practical or legislative attention to the constitutional problems the decision had uncovered might have done. Drifting through a third illness, apparently without any provision for the handling of a major national emergency other than a talk with the vice-president, Eisenhower revealed the singularly static quality of his thinking. Despite three warnings, no sense of moral urgency impelled him to distinguish his situation, and thus his responsibilities, from Wilson's.

By contrast, the energetic reaction of the leader to the full demands his decision imposes upon him strengthens the moral intuition and gives us the measure of the man. Only by means of an intensive preoccupation with the detailed considerations following from any decision can he ensure attention to the practical details to be dealt with if the implications of immorality in the major decision are effectively to be checked. In the incessant struggle with recalcitrant political fact he learns to focus the essence of a problem in the significant detail, and to articulate the distinctions which clarify the detail as significant, with what is sometimes astounding rapidity. Like Lincoln, he can distinguish his relation to God from the constitutional responsibilities a questionable decision exacts of him. Like Roosevelt, he can distinguish an attitude toward a Russian leader he may share with a host of Americans from the responsibilities diplomatic convention may impose upon him. He chooses to subordinate one to the other, sometimes reluctantly, accepting criticism for the lesser immoralities facts breed. The very nature of a choice so grounded in distinction and fact leads to the valid convictions which become force of will in the manifest leader. The capacity for making the distinctions of which diplomacy is compact, and the facility with language which can render them into validity in the eyes of other men are the leader's means for transforming the moral intuition into moral leadership.

The making of distinctions, like the perception of the great distinctions made, is an inordinately difficult business. Lincoln's slow progress towards the several marking his achievement is

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even now unrecognizable as such, and loosely interpreted as the alternation of inconsistency with vision. But because it is the function of the mind to turn the one into the other by means of the capacities with which words endow it, we do not unwisely examine the type of distinction, in the sphere of politics, on which decisions hang. Only recently, and perhaps because a television debate can so effectively dramatize President Kennedy's extraordinary mastery of detail, have the abilities on which the capacity for making distinctions depend begun to be clearly discernible at the level of politics. In his recent evaluation of Kennedy's potentialities for leadership, Walter Lippmann has cited the "precision" of his mind, his "immense command" of factual detail, and his "instinct for the crucial point" as impressive in the extreme; and it is surely clear that the first of these is the result of the way in which the individual's command of language interacts with the other two.

Yet if abilities of this sort are rarely perceptible except in the wake of events, Mr. Kennedy's disagreement with his predecessor about the handling of the episode of the spy plane at the Summit Conference, expressed in the campaign as a belief that regrets were in order, was almost certainly an instinct following from his perception of the crucial point. Because the leader's dependence on detail is indeed instinctive, until the language of diplomacy refines and clarifies that instinct, Kennedy's phrasing did not distinguish the regrets from a gesture of surrender to Khrushchev, or from compliance with unreasonable demands. Yet President Eisenhower's inability to respond to the moral urgency dictating a statement of this sort does point to the inadequacy of our conventional estimates of the statesman's intellect. Language is his only means to the preservation of the illusion of sufficient sympathy with his major opponents that their mutual tensions can be explored. To distinguish, by this means, a diplomatic apology from subservience to an opponent, or from the acceptance of conditions to which he need not accede is the statesman's responsibility. The acceptance of this responsibility became, in fact, the "magic formula" for getting on with the Russians which Roosevelt had in pre-eminent

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degree, deny the existence of such a formula though Richard Hofstadter may; and the Democratic President was following it on the day of his death, with attention to the effects of language upon international relations, not without anger but in spite of his anger with Stalin.

And when Khrushchev, in his felicitations to the President-elect, urged upon him a return to the methods of Roosevelt, he was in essence seeking the type of intelligence capable of preventing the disruption of communication between nations which are, when deprived of it, potential belligerents. So when Eisenhower, who genuinely wanted to work for peace, felt his only means to this end was to order American naval and air forces into the waters off Cuba, he may have done so with impunity; but we must also remember that he did so almost six months to the day after he had fostered the preoccupation with Cuba of which the Russian leader gave evidence in the resentment he expressed to newsmen in Paris that we apologized to Cuba without apologizing to Russia. Even so far-reaching can be the results of the failure to establish communication among men.

Something of that mystical process by which personality defines itself and becomes character, toughened and made resilient by its acceptance of the consequences of choices unwelcome to it, is revealed to us in an examination of the mode of thinking to which the political leader is prone. In the moral paradoxes developing from Mr. Eisenhower's decision to seek a second term we begin to see that a deficiency of the intellect will result in defective morality at the level of leadership. Only in a democracy, however, does the leader as individual interact with groups of varying sizes in a fashion that enables us to establish the very substance of his morality as intellectual in origin. Without the dialectical process implied by this interaction, the demands leadership imposes on the intellect would be exorbitant indeed. Here too the fullness of our information about the circumstances surrounding the Eisenhower decision can serve to broach the larger issue.

We may note, first of all, the distinctive fact about the way

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in which the decision was reached. That decision represents the triumph of the sense of the group over the intuitions of its leader. "I didn't know you'd all be against me," the President is said to have remarked to some of the group who were responsible for his decision; but already we had been aware of the direction of his thinking, and before the middle of January few reliable men in Washington suspected that he would run. More important than the fact of this triumph of the group, however, is the way in which it came about. Perhaps only because thirteen men gathered at the White House under extraordinary conditions, on a January evening in 1956, does the opportunity for clarifying what has heretofore been the spontaneous behavior of leadership present itself.

It reflects no great credit on Eisenhower that he should have summoned twelve men of the sort he chose to advise him in this instance. Their opinions were no more a touchstone of public opinion at the time of the summoning than they were a reflection of the direction of his leanings: public opinion was waiting upon the directing forces which crystallize it. Yet it is the caliber of all but two of these men which we question far more significantly. For we need not suppose their weaknesses were wholly dictated by partisanship. Quite obviously the proper formulation of the problem depended on a breadth of reference and relevance which was beyond the majority of these men. It occurred to no one, apparently, to suggest the ethical nature of the problem, or to point to the possibility that the ethics of the military man could be a real danger in the situation. Nor did it occur to anyone, presumably, to examine the distinctions which might obtain in such a crisis in France or England, where the constitutional forms would sanction a different ethic in a similar situation. No responsible citizen of either party can but be incredulous at the nature of the arguments Milton Eisenhower is said to have summarized. The assumption that his brother could do more effective work for peace as President than as a private citizen whose efforts a Democratic President would resent was apparently weighed against arguments on the other side so essentially personal as to induce guilt in any of us, let

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alone in the military man: his long service, the burden of another term, and the luxuries of retirement. This is the perspective within which a decision instinct with constitutional and international reverberations was reached.

What we have been told about the evening of January the thirteenth affords us some insight into the nature of the limitations it imposed on minds already limited in scope. As it has been described in Robert Donovan's *The Inside Story*, the discussion in his study, which clearly shifted the direction of Eisenhower's thinking on the matter of his running as nothing else had, was in essence a series of presentations of the attitudes and arguments of each of those invited, a series summarized by another individual. This is not the way leaders of men think; it is the way the citizens of a democracy provoke other citizens to thought. As a series of opinions, the course of the evening in the study may be likened to the series of discussions of the matter which had appeared in the newspapers in the preceding five months; and indeed, because such a series of positions would inevitably be marked by less variety and less objectivity than an equivalent series by the more responsible columnists, the President would have achieved the same ends, if not a sounder position, by reading the newspapers in that period. To suggest that the mental processes of this man confine themselves to the initial phases of thought is to account for the resemblance his thinking bears to that of the average private citizen. The type of meeting that is preliminary to thinking became, for Eisenhower, its culmination.

The tendency indicates why the perspective held, and was not found wanting. We may criticize Eisenhower, as we have criticized Roosevelt, for the men with whom he surrounded himself in the process of governing. Yet the issue, for a leader, is whether at the time of any major decision he fails to see beyond the limitations of those with whom he may work: the final responsibility is his. And about his initial responsibilities, in his relations with the twelve men he may summon to counsel him, we can be equally clear. Even in seeking advice in a council of war or a cabinet meeting he has a function.

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In crucial instances the leader proposes a plan. It may have its seeds in others, it may not; but he gives it formulation. And if he enters his council and finds that the twelve men on whom he may call are against him, the intensive thinking that formulation exacts of him issues in a capacity for assessing a variety of critical observations with great speed. The ability to deal with advice that is unsound necessarily involves the verbal skills and a penchant for the particular: it is contingent upon a grasp of detail. All these are temporarily heightened by immediate exercise in the area of the material under consideration, irrespective of the individual's initial qualifications. Not merely will the leader anticipate the objections which will be raised in the council, and have arguments that may outweigh them ready to tongue, but his sense of the particular deficiencies in the plan, dependent as it is on the specific effects of application in a number of related areas, quickens the alterations in phraseology which can sharpen these considerations to the point at which modification can incorporate conflicting details into a solution. And because of the effects of the power to formulate and articulate, it will often come about that a leader can trust his judgment even when a dozen of those he trusts most disagree with him. The function of the council is not to determine whether twelve men or one man is in the right, but by the process of discussion to clarify the rationale for any given decision.

On any major issue, then, the leader must prepare and adopt a tentative position as a means to clarification. This product of the preliminary phase of his thinking is to be distinguished from that kind of formulation at which he and his council may ultimately arrive, even as what follows from it is to be differentiated from the simmering mental events to which a series of speeches gives rise. As the United Nations demonstrates, it takes a long time for a group to focus itself on essentials under such conditions. That its accomplishments are dependent on so much behind-the-scenes activity is no fault of that organization, but the fault of the human mind. For the adjustment of international differences in any area depends on the elaboration of details tending to appear insignificant when the problem is

broached; and extended speech-making has the effect of inhibiting the exploration of those which prove crucial in retrospect. Since the mind cannot hold many details in consciousness at a given moment, it can hardly retain through a series of a dozen statements the more subtle and complex of the details any one of these statements may have raised. The mere attention to an unbroken series temporarily distracts the individual from the significances he sees, and protracts an intuitive assessment of the factors integral to any problem. Only with withdrawal can he seize again upon these, and modify the few of them which this or that acute observation has called into question for him.

The mode of discussion which prevails at the United Nations makes individual conferences a necessity in that organization. The adjustment of the several details crucial to each nation in any projected undertaking is difficult to achieve without the type of exchange which does not obscure these details. Even so unwieldy an organization as this can be quickly impelled beyond the type of preliminary thinking that is its norm, however, when the decision of an individual seemingly at odds with the group's reluctance to act forces it into activity. Whether the Suez is to be policed or whether the Belgian troops are to leave the Congo, an individual focusses the thinking of the organization on an area in such a way that detailed practical considerations are mandatory. And leadership within a democracy is a parallel instance of an identical process. If the relationship in which the leader stands to his council of advisors is properly conceived, then the relative privacy of an institution like the American Cabinet permits the man blessed with leadership that kind of engagement with the thinking of other men which hastens decision and action. At its most vigorously competitive such an engagement can sharpen issues as effectively as war does, sufficiently that men resign their posts rather than die in battle; but it will seldom do so in arguments about the "broad general principles" which so consistently concerned President Eisenhower. Because the rationale for a political decision must necessarily be defined as the alterations implied for a mass of details lurking in the several areas affected by its application,

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rather than as a set of principles, a Truman or a Roosevelt forces men far beyond such preliminaries.

To this end the leader's implied position exists primarily that thinking about the problem should take place. It is fundamentally a catalyst for the examination of those specific and detailed implications buried in a problem which a single human mind has the utmost difficulty in examining exhaustively. At its most active the mind responds more effectively to particular points than to groups of points summarized over a period of time. It may weigh many, as a rat in obtaining its food cannot; but the many must be concretely examined—each in isolation, and with the insistence with which the rat presses the bar for the pellet—before their proper relation to others can be weighed. Men have not time, always, to raise all the objections to any given plan they might be able to anticipate if granted an eternity; but if they are keen enough, they can at least respond to each suggestion and each objection as it arises, either with an alternative position, or with the dismissal of an alternative position clarified by the objection. And in this process they provide the wealth of suggestions from which the leader's keener intuition dictates a selection as grounds for a decision. So in the most acute of leaders the early formulation of the position will be sketchy, the structure highly fluid if not inchoate; a string of details may serve more effectively in the initial presentation of a position than any coherent and structured conception of the problem could possibly do. For in any group discussion the multiplication of these specific considerations is the primary end; and the greater the apparent coherence of any group of details, the greater the inability of any member of the group properly to examine those which are problematical.

Given the fact that the initial phases of a political discussion of any breadth verge on disorder, the assumption of leadership has no practical effect upon thinking without three qualities in the leader. He must reveal that kind of personality which instinctively accepts the assumption and invites it in others; he must evidence that ease when confronted with disorder which permits of incisive thinking in the presence of maximum human

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confusion; and he must demonstrate exceptional dexterity in forming his opinions in a number of areas. Until the leader of men can express himself cogently, his thoughts are impressions merely; nor will they work for him, as impressions, any more effectively in the particular meeting than will the lowliest opinions of the uneducated man. The leader's work has scarcely begun until he can confront his council with his own ideas in that cogent form which is the proof for men that thinking has gone on, thereby challenging them to the kind of exchange which multiplies considerations.

That men respond to these criteria for leadership without having elaborated their components in any systematic fashion in no way invalidates their definitive effect. That other men achieve degrees of greatness by other means need confuse us in no way about the nature of leadership. For so long as these things are absent, men will love, admire, and respect another man; but they will not be led by him beyond the initial limitations of their position. And if one or two of the reliable men who were present at the meeting of Friday the thirteenth of January failed to raise points we deem fundamental in the appraisal of this particular question, we must attribute their failure to the way in which uninterrupted incremental thinking thwarts the exploration of a problem. We suspect it is because the leader did not confront his council with anything resembling cogency.

"It is a very critical thing to change governments in this country at a time that is unexpected," Mr. Eisenhower had said at a press conference held in Key West five days previous to the evening in the study. "We accustom ourselves . . . [to] changing our government every four years. But always something happens that is untoward when a government is changed at other times. It is a rather startling thing." Even these remarks might have served him, had he subjected his intuition to discerning scrutiny in a Socratic exchange: more than once Roosevelt himself benefited from engaging in that dialogue with the press for which Walter Johnson has recently commended him. Yet Eisenhower drifts, unchecked, from the critical considerations to the merely startling. And the possi-

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bility of an unexpected change in government will remain vaguely "untoward" until it is conceived in terms of concrete political facts: in terms of such specific and impersonal matters as the length of time separating presidential elections, and the implications for democracy of a situation not anticipated by any constitutional provision for the calling of new elections upon dissatisfaction with a President not voted into office on his own merits, or by constitutional provision for the management of an interim when the leadership is not localized in an individual. Provide the terms, and a problem dimly sensed becomes a problem clarified for solution. Formulate it in this way and the decision entails clear-cut responsibilities of some magnitude. At the least, men desirous of retaining their leader can respond with practical suggestions. The impression the press formed of President Eisenhower's language, once publicized by a rendition of the Gettysburg address into his characteristic diction, tells us, among other things, that Rockefeller's abilities in encounters with the press portend distinguished political thinking. The language Eisenhower might have used, in this instance, tells us much about the kind of man who leads other men beyond the limitations of their position, and in the process sees beyond the limitations of his own.

As it extends itself beyond the confines of the cabinet meeting, thrusting itself imperceptibly into the labyrinthine details of democracy, the dialectic of leadership is only subtly apprehensible in its own time. Yet it is this dialectic which implements the sinuous forward progresses in democratic thinking. And because all things which elude us in the hustle and bustle of the daily activities of the democracy are given point by the insights a single evening set aside by a specific president for an ostensibly informal purpose affords us, let us not ignore their larger implications. The peculiarly vague clues we normally have to the assessment of a leader's thinking by the general public have their adequacy. We are able to sense these in the hypothetical, as in the real event. Thus we may hypothesize the intuitive reaction of the nation had President Eisenhower made his deci-

sion about the second candidacy in terms of constitutional rather than personal arguments, exploring the differences between our constitutional forms and those of England, and consequently between his position and that of a Churchill, had the latter run for re-election under similar circumstances, and free of the intrusive factor of a vice-prime minister.

In the case of the advisors themselves, it is impossible to believe that had this President turned to his council after an incisive discussion of some breadth, and said with dignity and conviction, "It does not seem to me in the highest interests of the country I serve that I should run for a second term," they would not have been effectively, if reluctantly, silenced. There would, obviously, have been innumerable immediate outcries of personal dismay and political thunder on the national scene in such a situation. The immediate response of the average citizen would have been loud and baffled resentment as he explored the new terms. The reluctance would have been more evident as the grounds were explored, the silence slower to come about. But this is precisely the significance, for a democracy, of clarifying the specific grounds on which a decision is made, and the terms in which it is couched. Analyze the problem in terms of a constitutional and political ethic, and it becomes a complex problem. Analyze that problem in terms of a personal and military ethic, and it remains a simple problem. By contrast with the frantic verbal activity and its gradual reluctant abatement dictated by the larger group when the considerations are complex, there was no outburst over the decision as it was actually made. There was nothing the average citizen, unhabituated himself to think in broader terms, could not understand, and hence must debate. Without the vigorous debate which alone whets thinking, he does not move beyond his very average inclinations on any major issue.

Time will disclose the interrelationships that exist between the nature of the leader's thinking, the kind of thinking it produces in the totality of the populace, and the speed with which decisive action ensues. Five years later the nation turned uneasily to two candidates sadly deficient in the ripeness that is

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all, but clearly possessed of convictions about some of the responsibilities of leadership: a wide arc of reaction to a series of events in the White House whose effects on the conduct of office, unattended, were obscured by attention to the vice presidency. But subtly as these interrelationships might manifest themselves, they were to be seen in every failure to focus the national attention on the central problems in such a way that they did not remain hidden. That they remained hidden from the leader accounts for the fact that they still do not strike the people forcibly. Without making them explicit we do not know why he failed in any area; we know only, and with an indifference destructive of democratic progress, that it kept happening. Even the intuitive behavior of large groups begins to have meaning, however, when we examine the effects of a single problem upon the populace. It is to the sense of a lack somewhere, a failure in terminology, that we may ascribe the indefinable tone of the editorial comment with which, in March of 1956, the formal announcement of the candidacy was met across the country. The very unobtrusiveness with which it betrayed itself in newspapers conventionally accepted as partisan, but too responsible to express themselves in terms of the economic satisfaction which the private citizen or the behavior of stocks might more jubilantly express, is significant. There was sympathy for Mr. Eisenhower; there was acceptance; but there was none of that surge from the depths of the consciousness of a people with which, intuitively and in partial resentment, it responds to moments of greatness.

Indefinable such moments are; but the failure to see that they are not unrecognizable is the result of our unwillingness to accept the inevitable fact about leadership in a democracy. Except when the nation is beset from without, the normal criterion of greatness is the wake of disharmony following from its acts. In this respect the moral equivalent of war can be said to transcend William James's conception of it. It is the leader himself who provides that equivalent, sharpening internal factions into violent activity until its resolution, decades thereafter, shall justify his major decisions. The key to decisive moral im-

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pact lies in the chaos evident when thinking in the area of a new problem is forced upon the people by a decision whose grounds are not readily comprehensible to the average man. In contradistinction to his confused instinctive response, compact of a vast range of particular responses, concrete arguments, and specific modes of argumentation, it is the function of the leader, together with the members of his council, to provide the terminology and the frame of reference within which the decision will ultimately be seen, and guided by which the argumentation will gradually subside as we focus on the most significant aspects of the decision.

Thus in the outcry at the moment of their implementation, for example, it is obviously some process of this sort which followed from Truman's decision to remove MacArthur from his command, and from the decision of the Senate, within whose chambers a group, rather than an individual, acted belatedly in the function of the leader, to subject McCarthy's activities to scrutiny. The intuitive response of the group will often at the outset be wide of the mark, before it focusses on the radical elements in the problem at issue. The response of the individual gifted with leadership, intuitive though it may sometimes be, will be so close to the central issues that only the historian can demonstrate the centrality of the leader's thinking, as the discussion of peripheral and irrelevant considerations simmers down. This, clearly, has been the case with Roosevelt's social legislation. The leader does not brood Buddha-like over the opinions of his followers and then come up with an answer. Or, if he does, the answer normally proves no more satisfactory than those of the men who elected him. Thinking in the political arena is one of the most energetic of activities. Ever alert for the opening to which he can adjust his high strategy, incessantly wary lest he reveal that strategy at a moment that will aid his opponents, the leader does battle with opinions.

In this battle the dialectic of leadership is no mere academic matter. Its specific effects in crystallizing national problems are seldom discernible. At its inception, the direction the argumentation will take is hardly clear; at its completion, the full

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resonance of its early absurdities is all but forgotten, as is the case with that uneasy climate of opinion through which Lincoln moved. Only gradually in the course of the Babel-like outcries enveloping the citizenry do we sense that, shorn of the limitations the initial criticisms customarily reveal, the group attains to that larger perspective to which reluctant acceptance is the prelude.

When the thinking of the masses lumbers effortfully towards those expansions of perspective it fitfully achieves, the personality of the leader is his major instrument in implementing the serpentine forward progresses of collective human thought. To this dynamic instrument personal warmth and harmonious interaction with others are an irrelevancy, occasionally useful, but as frequently dangerous in the inhibitions of vigor in the populace which normally accompany them. But in the ability of the leader to compel thinking, to intrude himself into those citadels of complacency which will resent his and all intrusion, and to triumph over the unpleasantness which is the lot of any man who compels thinking lies his essential relevancy to the democratic process. This ability will prove itself in the national picture even as it operates within the limited confines of the cabinet meeting.

As a decision, the Eisenhower decision will have its moderate impact upon the history of our thinking about the form of government which is democracy. The establishment of its inadequate rationale will ultimately settle into fact; and no sophisticated observer of the second Republican administration in the second half of our century will again make an analogous decision without accepting a full share of his responsibility for the proper uses of power. It is not the decision itself with which we have been primarily concerned, however. Other leaders have erred, and the country sustains their inadequacies. Rather it is the insights this decision provides for us about the modes of thinking by which leadership manifests itself, and the ways in which our form of government protects us against the inadequacies of its leaders, which have been our concern. These we have only begun to explore.

Fayne Berland

BALLAD

I am poor, I am thin,
I am hungry to lean
my soft hands on virtuous wood.
Layer by layer I'd clean
down, down to a kernel of good.

Dance your skinny ankles, girl.
Who settled her smile and twisted her curl
to get the robbers in?

I am sick to a sorrow of sin
masking my freedom of face,
smothering sweet breath of skin
with a costume of stifling grace.

Sleep it off, sleep it off, child.
Who wore out her skirts and ran herself wild
to lure the robbers in?

The chief, well, without his cap,
he is shorter by far than I.
And someone, anyone, else can nap
in his bed and button his fly.

Ho! Polish your fingernails, whore.
Who jumped the stairs to unlock the door
and begged and promised the robbers in?

I thought him a man, the rheumy goat
with a voice like a broom scratching the floor.
I'll leave him, look, I can leave him still,
I'll damn his lore as I slam his door,
I'll yell and strengthen my throat
with *I will* and *I will* and *I will*!

And you crept bold as an autumn mouse
to the boldest of their kin;
pulling and pushing him hot to your house,
you tricked and fairly kicked
the robbers in.

Laurence Stapleton

‘THE EAGLE MUST HAVE AN EDUCATED EYE’

Rim-rounding from cloud
In a slow power-float, he
Suddenly stepped up to high, his
Impossible try trumpeting to a
Crescendo and a close
Over some somber, leaf-brown
Sun-pale sweep of time
In a November earth-space.

Men call that fact.

As the flat-winged white head
Bright tail dives for the duck
And the duck submarines the lake,
That is the arc of moment to take
Lightly—for to see is to see first
The far-trained eagle said,

Not to explain.

YE'



FIVE POEMS BY WILFRED OWEN
WITH DRAWINGS BY BEN SHAHN

*Wilfred Owen was killed near the village
of Ors in France on November 4th, 1918.*

PRINTED AT THE GEHENNA PRESS FOR MR WINTER 1961

MINERS

There was a whispering in my hearth,
A sigh of the coal,
Grown wistful of a former earth
It might recall.

I listened for a tale of leaves
And smothered ferns;
Fronde-forests; and the low, sly lives
Before the fawns.

My fire might show steam-phantoms simmer
From Time's old cauldron,
Before the birds made nests in summer,
Or men had children.

But the coals were murmuring of their mine,
And moans down there
Of boys that slept wry sleep, and men
Writhing for air.

And I saw white bones in the cinder-shard.
Bones without number;
For many hearts with coal are charred
And few remember.

I thought of some who worked dark pits
Of war, and died
Digging the rock where Death reposes
Peace lies indeed.



Comforted years will sit soft-chaired
In rooms of amber;
The years will stretch their hands, well-cheered
By our lives' ember.

The centuries will burn rich loads
With which we groaned,
Whose warmth shall lull their dreaming lids
While songs are crooned.
But they will not dream of us poor lads
Lost in the ground.



FUTILITY

Move him into the sun—
Gently its touch awoke him once,
At home, whispering of fields unsown.
Always it woke him, even in France,
Until this morning and this snow.
If anything might rouse him now
The kind old sun will know.
Think how it wakes the seeds,—
Woke, once, the clays of a cold star.
Are limbs, so dear-achieved, are sides,
Full-nerved—still warm—too hard to stir?
Was it for this the clay grew tall?
—O what made fatuous sunbeams toil
To break earth's sleep at all?

MY SHY HAND

My shy hand shades a hermitage apart,
O large enough for thee, and thy brief hours.
Life there is sweeter held than in God's heart,
Stillter than in the heavens of hollow flowers.

The wine is gladder there than in gold bowls.
And Time shall not drain thence, nor trouble spill.
Sources between my fingers feed all souls,
Where thou mayest cool thy lips, and draw thy fill.

Five cushions hath my hand, for reveries;
And one deep pillow for thy brow's fatigues;
Langour of June all winterlong, and ease
For ever from the vain untravelled leagues.

Thither your years may gather in from storm,
And Love, that sleepeth there, will keep thee warm.



WILD WITH ALL REGRETS

To Siegfried Sassoon

My arms have mutinied against me,—brutes!
My fingers fidget like ten idle brats,
My back's been stiff for hours, damned hours.
Death never gives his squad a Stand-at-ease.
I can't read. There: it's no use. Take your book.
A short life and a merry one, my buck!
We said we'd hate to grow dead-old. But now,
Not to live old seems awful: not to renew
My boyhood with my boys, and teach 'em hitting,
Shooting, and hunting,—all the arts of hurting!
—Well, that's what I learnt. That, and making money.
Your fifty years in store seem none too many,
But I've five minutes. God! For just two years
To help myself to this good air of yours!
One Spring! Is one too hard to spare? Too long?
Spring air would find its own way to my lung,
And grow me legs as quick as lilac-shoots.
Yes, there's the orderly. He'll change the sheets
When I'm lugged out. Oh, couldn't I do that?
Here in this coffin of a bed, I've thought
I'd like to kneel and sweep his floors for ever,—
And ask no nights off when the bustle's over,
For I'd enjoy the dirt. Who's prejudiced
Against a grimed hand when his own's quite dust,—
Less live than specks that in the sun-shafts turn?

Dear dust—in rooms, on roads, on faces' tan!
I'd love to be a sweep's boy, black as Town;
Yes, or a muckman. Must I be his load?
A flea would do. If one chap wasn't bloody,
Or went stone-cold, I'd find another body.

Which I shan't manage now. Unless it's yours.
I shall stay in you, friend, for some few hours.
You'll feel my heavy spirit chill your chest,
And climb your throat on sobs, until it's chased
On sighs, and wiped from off your lips by wind.

I think on your rich breathing, brother, I'll be weaned
To do without what blood remained me from my wound.





THE PARABLE OF THE OLD MEN AND THE YOUNG

So Abram rose, and clave the wood, and went,
And took the fire with him, and a knife.
And as they sojourned both of them together,
Isaac the first-born spake and said, My Father,
Behold the preparations, fire and iron,
But where the lamb for this burnt-offering?
Then Abram bound the youth with belts and straps,
And builded parapets and trenches there,
And stretched forth the knife to slay his son.
When lo! an angel called him out of heaven,
Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad,
Neither do anything to him. Behold,
A ram, caught in a thicket by its horns;
Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.
But the old man would not so, but slew his son,—
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.



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The Unknown Picasso

OF THE THREE PICASSOS: the demi-god, the man, and the monster, the general public knows only the first and the last. Even his own mother, in her old age, admired her famous son to such an extent that, learning he had taken up writing, she addressed him, "I think you are capable of anything. If you were to tell me one day that you had read Mass, I would believe you." On the other hand, such a close collaborator as Georges Braque was so shocked by Picasso's manner of painting that at one point he compared it to "drinking petrol in the hope of spitting fire." But I believe, with my heart rather than with my mind, that both the alleged demi-god and the supposed Devil are less important than the Man Picasso, the indefatigable *homo faber*, continuously working, worrying, even despairing beneath the stony immobile mask that his square face has become in the course of hard decades.

In an effort to grasp Picasso's multi-faceted personality, one seeks analogies in the not too distant past for this man who triumphantly defies definition, and one stumbles upon Richard Wagner, the genius who was showman, megalomaniac and heel all at once. Both men are sophisticated barbarians, able to arouse irrational anger as well as an enthusiasm bordering on sexual excitement. Wagner combined a gigantic orchestra with the most powerful voices and the most unorthodox *mise en scène* to create theatrical effects that had never been dreamt of before, yet he could also write relatively simple and even sentimental *Lieder*. Picasso could paint "Guernica"—and also syrupy portraits of his son Paul. Like Wagner, Picasso has tried nearly everything, for in a sixty-year career he has been painter, print-maker, sculptor, ceramicist, stage designer, poet, dramatist, and even a political figure of sorts.

Yet there remains one big difference between the two: Wagner, son of a basically optimistic age, was convinced that he had achieved what he had set out to do, that he had given the world the *Zukunftsmusik* it must have. Picasso seems to lack this certainty about himself, and along with it the attitude of the victor, in his old age looking down upon his enemies with indifference, while enjoying his gains. Picasso is a tragic figure, as he constructs and the next day destroys what is only half-finished, to go on to new experiments, seemingly never contented, and by his very manner of living and working sadly reversing his arrogant dictum, "Je ne cherche pas, je trouve," to read: I do not find, I seek.

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If the "Era Wagner" was boisterously confident (the pessimism of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche certainly did not fit in!), the "Era Picasso" is loudly unredeemed. Significantly, no one speaks of an "Age of Matisse," although the King of the Wild Beasts was, for a short time, *chef d'école* in what seemed to be a revolution. Actually, the *fauves* remained within the framework of the Renaissance tradition; their mild-mannered chief did not stop very far beyond what Watteau, Fragonard and Renoir had chosen to do—above all to convey a sense of peacefulness, to induce pleasant dreams, yearning for an art of balance, purity and serenity free of troubling or depressing subject matter that should be "like a good armchair in which to rest from physical fatigue."

From the 'fifties I remember distinctly the two major retrospectives at New York's Museum of Modern Art—the one dedicated to Matisse, the other to Picasso. In the first, optimism was smiling from every wall, and there was hardly a picture that did not exude the Gallic sense of charm and order. In the Picasso show, the number of "perfect" pictures or sculptures was much smaller, if one excluded the non-Picassoid Picassos (the very early romantic work, and the neo-Classical interludes), and there was no common denominator except for the uncanny feeling that a sorcerer had staged a show devoid of stability, of permanence.

Matisse was only a dozen years older than Picasso, yet, while at his show, I had the feeling that I was far back in the last century, whereas the Picasso show alarmed, annoyed, challenged me (and many others) beyond description, even though quite a few things in it were far from new. Though they were there, I did not pay much attention to the tender and melancholy paupers of his Blue Period, or the pink circus folk of his Rose Period, or to the subtle portraits that stemmed from Ingres—the Picasso I remember was neither lyrical nor playful, neither delicate nor decorative. The Picasso I remember was the one who wanted, and, at eighty, still wants, to change the world rather than to describe it, the anguished, apocalyptic figure, in short—the Cubist.

I am not convinced by Picasso's own statement that Cubism was nothing but a search for new forms, that it was devoid of any social, political, philosophical implications. At first sight, perhaps, Cubism seemed primarily concerned with reinterpreting the external world in a detached, objective way, yet actually it was the first real break with a centuries-old aesthetics, the terrifying creation of an artist who henceforth would paint objects as he *thought* them rather than as he saw them. Picasso is an intellectual who likes to hide his braininess (sometimes with silly pranks, artistic and otherwise), yet I do not hesitate to say that, by achieving "freedom *vis-à-vis* nature" (to quote his follower,

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the sculptor Lipchitz), he has had an influence on the modern world (and not art alone) similar to that of Einstein's theories.

Einstein broke with the mechanistic principles of "classical" physics (with its optimistic belief that all in nature had been made certain and predictable). Working in another medium, Picasso proclaimed that the realm of art extended far, far beyond the "safe" sensations received by the retina, and that the artist was the receptacle of emotions and inspirations coming from every source. But he was more than a recipient—he was a world architect, a world philosopher, reshaping, as it seemed best to him, the universe he had torn and broken into many parts!

Let us not be deceived by the Cubist still lifes with bottles or guitars; their relative calm is a thin cover under which the most ferocious intellectual winds of the twentieth century are blowing! Picasso has been "Picasso" from the very moment he invented Cubism and began to force three dimensions into the two-dimensional surface without recourse to *trompe l'œil* and other worn-out devices, not in order to make pathetic little replicas of the large world, but in order to construct metaphors, adequate to cope with the spiritual upheaval of his time. In this sense, I see no basic difference between the celebrated "Portrait of Kahnweiler" of 1910 and the much later "Guernica" or the very recent "Variations on Velasquez' Maids of Honor": being anti-Nature, Picasso tries, in whatever he does, to slip the irritating world into philosophical containers, one more oddly shaped than the other; fashioning one bag after another, always hoping to have created the fitting one, yet always discovering in time he had torn a hole or two in his orgiastic frenzy of intellectual effort, and always fashioning, out of scraps, the new thing in the hope of final success.

Do I, perhaps, take Picasso too seriously? Those who have been howling "Charlatan!" and "Faker!" at any mention of Picasso's name, have been misled by the master's occasional frivolities, his not infrequent *jeux d'esprit*, and, perhaps, also by the indiscriminations of the Picasso worshippers who treasure every scrawl he ever produced, and accept as *ultima ratio* every *bon mot*. I myself feel Picasso's "humor" is as metaphysically rooted as the whimsicality of Klee. It is tragic to see a man, driven by demons, discard one personal style after another, pick up every inspiration that comes from the outside (someone remarked that Picasso is in the habit of "boarding every new train he sees"), to the point where some critics have begun to wonder whether it is always the same hand in all of his works, whether there exists such a thing as an indivisible artistic personality called Picasso. I find it heroic to rely, as he has done, upon his own experiences, since modern art has no tradition of its own, to be his own ancestor, as it were, and to change styles rapidly

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not so much to create a sensation (as his denigrators maintain) as to avoid a petrified manner—which would be the death of all new life.

There are two major reasons why to this day none of the younger men has outstripped Picasso—men like Soulages or Mathieu, or the late De Staël and Pollock—the first being that no one born in this century has, apparently, risen to the heights of his craftsmanship. The second reason is more important. Picasso has tackled both form and content, thus distinguishing himself both from the extreme abstractionists who have only the most tenuous concern with content, and from the realist academicians who stubbornly stick to obsolete formal recipes. However close Picasso may have come, at times, to pure abstraction, he actually never rejected the tangible world, never could he do without signs and symbols rooted in everyday reality. What holds him back from the same abstract art to which he has given, above all, the feeling of freedom (that everything is allowed in the arts) is, one might think, the non-significance of abstract art, its basically hedonist, decorative character. He may have destroyed the conventional images of reality, but, trying to free himself from the terror of his own notions, he never fled into the no-man's land of abstraction; instead, he sought to transform objects into signs and symbols that would become spiritual acts, protests against self-submersion into nothingness.

Different as he is from all other contemporary artists, Picasso is, in more than one sense, the El Greco of our time—though an El Greco shorn of the Faith that moves mountains. The similarities are endless, though. The Greek who chose to spend his life in Spain; the innovator, in constant controversy with his patrons, startled by his unorthodox way of painting; the eccentric, given to ostentation and extravagance, arrogant about the high fees he charged for his work, many-sided and so advanced in his manner of vision that a critic would say about him, nearly three hundred years after his death: "Through heavy nightmares he seems to guide his brush, revealing the twisted incubus of his heated brain." Now the Spaniard who chose to live in France, and, through his life and work has, somehow, repeated the tribulations and triumphs of the Master of Toledo.

The parallels between Picasso and El Greco are too intriguing and too enlightening to relinquish easily. Each artist was the Mannerist master of his times. The term has often been used in a derogatory way, yet Mannerism, as we consider it today, was an important revolt of the sixteenth century against the classicism and rationalism of the High Renaissance, and thus a return to spirituality and emotionalism. El Greco was born in an era not unlike ours—one in which the ferocious strife between Catholicism and Protestantism occupied man as much

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as more secular ideological conflicts have shattered the peace in our time. It is no coincidence that El Greco is among the Old Masters Picasso reveres most, and whose direct influence can be seen in many of his works.

"Nature and art cannot be the same thing!" Picasso once exclaimed. El Greco knew this when he rebelled against the naturalism of the Cinquecento by deliberately elongating and "distorting" figures and faces, and by inventing glowing and orgiastic colors never encountered in everyday life. In his late painting, "Vision of the Apocalypse," there is as much ecstasy and anguish as there is in Picasso's "Guernica." In each case the artist had to coin a pictorial currency of his own: Raphael's formal values were not adequate to cope with the spiritual upheaval of the Counter-Reformation, and, similarly, the pictorial language of the École des Beaux-Arts had neither syntax nor terminology to express the "hysteria" of a Europe heading towards another world-engulfing war.

But difference between these two does exist—El Greco had the faith that allowed him to envisage angels and saints; the "angels" of the non-believer Picasso are such frightening apparitions as double-faced women, savage bulls, haunting minotaurs. To El Greco's questions, there was a ready answer: Christ. To Picasso there is such a multiplicity of possible solutions that, in actuality, there is no solution. Each of his works is another step, or stab, into the Big Unknown. What Picasso gives us, as Maurice Jardot sagely put it, "are answers that ask questions."

Only after all of this has been borne in mind carefully is it possible to pass a judgment upon Picasso (the phenomenon rather than the artist). He does not seek salvation for himself, and for others, in confusion and disorder, as his enemies claim. He does not lack unity, personality; he is not devoid of reverence—reverence for life, which he seeks to explain to himself and his fellow men by constantly going forward and backward (yet actually never backward), by oscillating from gracefulness to horror, from monstrosity to elegance, by renewing himself every year, nay, every day, and thereby maintaining himself as a solitary figure.

Taking a stand for or against Picasso is an act of commitment. There is no way of liking Picasso, and the anti-Picassos as well. The young artists of France who, in the 1940's, struggled hard to achieve a fusion of the two schools, the "pure" art of Matisse and the "social" art of Picasso, to "marry Picasso to Matisse," as one critic joked, or, as another wisecracked, to "eat their Matisse and have their Picasso, too," soon learned that they had tried to do something that, philosophically, was unfeasible.

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Though Picasso himself has been inspired by many artists of the past, he would be the last to endorse eclecticism. The alternative he proposes is "self-sacrifice" of the kind he has been practising for half a century—this protracted, dramatic forward thrust of a passionate temperament, a puzzling combination of "self-destruction" and constant rebirth, a never-finished process of breaking-up and reassembling the world of man. Admittedly, the spectacle is not a pretty one, as all who remember the gigantic Picasso Retrospective of 1957 will readily admit. Walking through the many halls of the Museum of Modern Art was an ordeal—doubly so because we, the spectators, were aware of the hopelessness of the endeavor, aware that the curtain would go down, and we would be out in the cold street, to shake with an incurable fever.

Others may have felt that they had been invited to the first showing of a highly controversial, experimental movie. Now and then it seemed to me as though, suddenly, for a few seconds, the sound track failed, and I saw the actors on the screen talk without hearing them. Yet in this particular show, I could not shout or clap my hands to make the operator correct the error. For I knew that at times even the greatest artist can fail to communicate, or that, perhaps, it was only I who could not hear the voices.

But even in those anguished moments in which I failed to grasp the connection between the sign and the thing signified, I did not lose faith in the sincerity of this showman's aims, in the orgiastic frenzy of his intellectual effort. "The day will come," Picasso has comforted us, "when the sight of a painting will ease the pain of a toothache." A modest wish, to be sure. But a survey of Picasso's work from 1900, when he started out as a follower of Toulouse-Lautrec, to his very latest configurations at the age of eighty, hints that modesty has been the least conspicuous of the artist's qualities. With his obsessive activity in a hundred directions, he has tried to be all in one, the doctor and the patient, the hangman and the condemned, the hunter and the prey. Heroically, he has wanted to externalize the conflict, to defeat the "enemy" (life) symbolically as did the prehistoric cavemen who drew on the rocks images of the beasts they wanted to kill. Their magic alone did not bring down a single one of them, but the strength they derived from knowing this magic was on their side did help them to survive—the kind of strength that we, perhaps, derive from looking at Picasso's creations, even if they now and then be absurd, ill-conceived, unfathomable. For it is no God who is speaking to us, nor the serpent, but Man, who has eaten of the fruit of the tree, and is leaving the Garden of Paradise with at least one precious thing to keep forever—the knowledge of good and evil.

Luther Allen

The Sunday Morning Visitor: Reflections on the Crisis in Saigon

WHEN I BEGAN MY CLASSES in comparative government and international relations at the University of Saigon last August, I told the students that I was supporting Senator Kennedy, and scheduled appropriate topics to coincide with the November elections. Somewhat in contradiction to the formalism of Vietnamese academic practice, I encouraged students to speak up in class and to confer with me at certain hours in my apartment, which happily is close to the Faculty of Law. I cannot say that this has been successful, but only that there have been limited, pathetic, but perhaps meaningful consequences.

Language barriers remain fundamental, not only in teaching but in all American activities; can one expect to communicate if one does not speak the native tongue? Clearly French remains the more effective second language, and despite the massive American aid program, academic and cultural traditions and policies have been transformed much less than political, economic or military institutions. America's decision to support the regime of President Ngo Dinh Diem demonstrated an empirical adaptability to the immediate local situation; but if one reviews the diverse American policies that have ensued, one sees an uncertainty, a lack of thought and coordination, and an insufficiency of expertise and understanding which are complicated by the language barrier. The task of reviewing American policy critically cannot be done here. The writer can only report personal experience.

With some distractions—such as a housing crisis caused by the transfer of the residences of Smith-Mundt professors from American to Vietnam control, and the personal tendency to indulge a perhaps too partisan interest in the American elections—I was slowly able to build up some spark of intellectual communication in and out of the classroom. As my ability to suggest local and regional examples grew, I found the formal patterns of the courses taking on a bit of the vitality of the American college classroom. But what developed outside class is perhaps more worth recording.

Already during the first week I found myself collecting young Vietnamese students at a reception at the American Ambassador's home for

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those who were being sent to America to study. Keenly interested in the American political scene, they also wanted to know my opinion of their regime and of recent developments in Korea. I was guarded in my replies then and later, for while Smith-Mundt professors are not United States officials and are said to enjoy the same professional freedom they have at home, they are warned against the possible offensiveness of critical or idle comments concerning foreign governments. The Political Affairs Counsellor went so far as to forbid me to associate with the intellectual opposition to the regime (he referred to the Committee of Eighteen which had attacked the Diem government in a manifesto in May and to Dr. Phan Quang Dan, a physician who was elected a deputy from Saigon only to be denied his seat); but he also expressed interest in the contacts I might develop with the relatively decentralized, unorganized and apolitical students of Saigon.

Sporadically, either singly or in small groups, they came to my house. Early in August two of them arrived, obviously to speak about Vietnamese politics in French. They began by asking why there was such a difference between presidential elections in the United States and those in South Vietnam (where an election is constitutionally scheduled for this April, but may be postponed, in view of rising Communist activity, by voting Diem one-year emergency powers). What effect would a Democratic victory have on American policy toward South Vietnam? They went on to speak of substantial opposition to Diem, especially in the countryside—an opposition turning Communist. They were bitter about the strictly controlled press (later, after the failure of the November 12th *coup*, five newspapers were raided by the government). And they commented unfavorably on the way last year's legislative elections were conducted, pointing out that army groups were carted to the polls to vote under orders for official candidates. Communication with these students was relatively effective.

The next visit consisted of three students speaking halting English. After an awkward hour of personal questions (would I advise celibacy as a way of life?) they came to their real interest. How would the U. S. elections affect Vietnam? Would the American Ambassador stay on? Was the *Time* story dealing with Diem's family true? (They had read it in the United States Information Service library, since copies of that particular issue were delayed, and scarce on the streets of Saigon.) They criticized the distribution of American aid: why weren't more industries established in Vietnam? why so many luxury imports? I tried to convince them that these were questions better asked of their own govern-

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ment, but they tended to place great responsibility on the American aid program. Hadn't the Americans thrown out Syngman Rhee? No, I said, the Koreans had. But I did not advise a student revolt. I tried, also, to defend the Diem regime, assuring them that no such conversation as ours could take place in North Vietnam. Our job was education; their generation could better serve Vietnam by studying now, no matter how difficult and inappropriate they might find our American textbooks. Surely there are enough grave deficiencies in the rigor and effectiveness of academic instruction at the University of Saigon to absorb all our energies.

A third group of visitors, French-speaking, was even more political. Again much interest in the American elections. What would be the effect on U. S. policy here? What did I think of South Vietnam? Diem, they said, had been very popular from 1955 to 1957, but since then his had become a "family" regime. They expressed particular hostility to Ngo Dinh Nhu and to Madame Nhu, complaining that his National Revolutionary Party had destroyed all opposition. They mentioned Dr. Phan Quang Dan, and told me that a student from my graduate seminar who was close to Dr. Dan was coming to see me later that week.

The seminar student was unlike the others—less open, exceedingly fearful. I had asked each member of the group to prepare a paper on some aspect of Vietnamese government, hoping to learn something myself and at least to sample the modest "research" that might result. Most of the students have since dutifully prepared official descriptions of institutions and policies, but this one wanted to deal with parties, the press, and elections! He claimed to know a lot about the organization, strength and leadership of the many parties which he said actually existed beneath the surface; but he asserted that he did not dare present such material in class. Most of the other students, he claimed, were civil servants, hence members of Nhu's party and possible informers. I suggested that he give a safe paper in class and present me with his scholarly work in private. He had agreed to this when he talked with me after class, but when he came to see me later he was aggressive. A newspaper editor, he wanted my views on Laos, Japan, the Congo and Cuba. I stopped him at Cuba and tried to get an agreement about the paper. He was now too scared to deal with political parties. I tried to plead for the free atmosphere of scholarship and told him I thought he was too fearful. As an American I could relish my freedom even in Saigon, he said, but not he. He began to suspect that I was an intelligence agent. But grudgingly he consented to collect material on the Vietnamese press and, using the USIS library,

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to compare the coverage of the best Vietnamese language paper with that of the *New York Times*. The paper was to be presented the week of the American elections. I never saw him again.

The Embassy's rigid position of support for the Diem government had been made clear to me from the start. Yet the USIS prepared to give fullest publicity to the American election results. Naturally I was glad to cooperate, and as the results came in my students and many other Vietnamese crowded the auditorium, waiting interminably for decisive results. Visual props were not lacking, though coordination, interpretation, and communication of the meaning of the results in three languages left something to be desired. Obviously the broadcasting companies and the Voice of America were tired, and anxious to return to their regular programs by the time they gave California and the election to Kennedy; but the Vietnamese crowd shouted "Vive Kennedy!" with enthusiasm—a cry repeated in the streets of Saigon two days later along with "Down with Diem!"

By Thursday, November 10th, there had hardly been time to formulate an answer to the question: what would Kennedy's victory mean for South Vietnam? But that was naturally the first question I was asked after a public lecture that evening, given in French, on the elections. Vietnam Press censored the last sentence of my text with its reference to the universal values which infused the American Constitution. I had informed the audience about the operation of our electoral college; but no American in Saigon was prepared to give advice on how to conduct a successful *coup*.

Early the next morning we were awakened by machine-gun and mortar fire. My first thought was that it was the Viet Cong—the Communists who, it had been rumored some weeks earlier, had artillery within range of Saigon. Very few students came to the Faculty that morning, and like the Chinese soup man and the *pousse-pousse* boys in the streets, they seemed passive. But the handful who were there gathered around for a remarkably frank exchange. They told me that part of the army was attempting a *coup* and had already surrounded the President's palace some three blocks distant. Most of the students interpreted the *coup* as South Vietnam's reaction to Kennedy's victory, and they strongly resented my suggestion that it was fomented by a Vietnamese equivalent of the Laotian Cong Le, or any other Communist group. There ensued a long and animated session, punctuated by not too distant shots. "Why don't American professors learn Vietnamese and stay at least two years?" I was asked. One student, in particular,

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was highly critical of the regime: he pointed to its lack of peasant support and to the existing extremes of wealth and poverty. In addition, he criticized the lack of communication between Vietnamese and Americans. I had not seen him before that session, and I do not expect to see him again.

On the street an American colleague and I met a group of earnest middle-class Vietnamese, and, when we introduced ourselves as American professors, they talked freely. They said that the popular demonstration in front of the palace was led by a paratroop officer whose troops included many refugees from the North, and whose unit has been used by the government for emergency duty against Viet Cong attacks, including the most recent and most serious incident around Kontum. Our interlocutors were very excited and intensely serious. They were bitterly critical of the Diem regime, calling it a dictatorship and Diem himself an American puppet. They had been distressed at the feebleness of anti-Communist action, not only in regard to the Kontum incident, but on the ground that there was no reaction to the recent killing of an American police instructor. They admired the timing of the *coup*, immediately after the American elections and on November 11th, a holiday both in France and the United States. They emanated revolutionary passion, and their faces indicated that they could kill, for a cause. This was pent-up anger. They had never personally benefited from U. S. aid, they said, but they were honest and respectful toward us. Their one regret was the fact that twenty-seven Asian delegations were in Saigon for an FAO meeting. Vietnam would lose face. Otherwise the *coup* was a very good thing.

With the help of a volunteer student I could understand the radio broadcasts and the manifestoes, some from rebel public meetings, others dropped from pro-Diem planes. These reports were confirmed by texts published in the French and English language newspapers, indicating that the President had called for military help from the provinces but had also agreed, while surrounded by hostile forces, to accept a new government.

But the confusing maneuvers of the paratroop officers, the uncoordinated and poorly thought-out appeals of the "Committee of the Revolution," and the lone-wolf appeal on the radio by Dr. Dan demonstrated a woeful lack of organization and tactical skill. The events also suggested a reluctance to envisage South Vietnam without Diem as at least the symbolic leader, and a belief in the President's capacity to understand the reasons for the rebellion. Some of them perhaps felt the

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powerful appeal of a father figure and even of Diem's "family regime" (if only it could be purged of corruption and disarmed of a quasi-totalitarian political apparatus). One must admit that the criticism of Mme. Nhu (who wears Western dress) and of the Agrovilles is in part reluctance to break with tradition. Had the *pousse-pousse* boys joined the rallies simply out of curiosity or were they protesting their coming debasement from the streets—victims of inevitable change in this city of such great contrasts?

The shooting at dawn on November 12th indicated that loyal troops had arrived. A particularly terrifying volley around 8:30 chilled me. Subsequently we saw people rushing up the street. A crowd which had been called out by the revolutionaries was shot into by the soldiers. No one knows how many were killed. By the end of the day order had been re-established. My faithful student translator reported in a soft and quivering voice that many people had died. Many people love Dr. Dan, he said. Was he right? Perhaps. Rudolf Serkin, who happened to be in Saigon just those two days, was reported to have observed that the people in the streets looked happy on the eleventh, but sad on the twelfth. Can an artist on a two-day visit judge better than the rest of us?

Late in the day an American stopped by to observe that we had seen one day of a free press, and that the *coup* had lasted just long enough for the moderate non-Communist opposition to become known to the government. Now we would see intensified repression. Nevertheless, American policy in South Vietnam remains a policy of non-intervention.

Sunday morning I awoke feeling very depressed and troubled. How could I continue to try to teach in the repressive wake of this abortive revolt? Already the most avid supporters of Diem had called it both Communist and Colonialist. At nine I was visiting my colleague next door, radio in hand, when a face appeared at the window asking for me. He introduced himself as having heard my lecture Thursday evening. He wanted to ask what Kennedy's victory would mean for Vietnam.

Before long it was apparent that this was a pure, brilliant and very well-read intellectual, and also a passionate lover of freedom, who had felt compelled to seek us and pour his heart out to us after the events of the past two days. Terribly nervous, with the face and body of a young student, he told us that he was over forty and had five children. Born in Hanoi, he had since 1945 dedicated himself to struggles for freedom. He had fought with the Vietminh, but had in 1954 broken with Communism and also with his father and his family roots in the North. He came to the South because he really believed in liberty and knew Amer-

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ican history well enough to feel assurance that our support for South Vietnam meant that our values would be shared by President Diem, whose nationalism and courage he strongly admired. He had held a civil service position in which he prepared reports on the Agroville program, critical reports which his superiors rejected in favor of safe ones more in accord with the ideas of the President. A few months ago he had resigned, and since then he had been studying and reading, mostly at the USIS library, devouring all the literature on Vietnam and reading American periodicals like the *Nation* and the *New Republic*.

The session lasted three hours. It was most moving. At one point we wept just as his twelve-year-old son had wept the day before on learning of the failure of the *coup*. Obviously he felt he had taken a risk in coming to us and preferred to sit facing away from the window. The policeman guarding our house went by from time to time—had he been one of the familiar ones, I would not have feared that he understood French.

I asked this Sunday morning visitor why the soldiers had not captured or killed President Diem, and he replied that the enlisted men were not politically instructed by their leaders and thus hesitated. Later he admitted that he himself did not want to do away with Diem, but only to change his policy. Dr. Dan might simply have set up an alternative and less efficient dictatorship. His strongest criticism was directed at the muzzling of the press, especially the strictness of licensing practices. But what was most striking was the fact that he, like my previous visitors, was just on the point of losing his liberal, anti-Communist faith, or simply faith *tout court*. He, like the others before him, had come for a breath of liberty. What would we do? Could we fly to Washington and make a report? He was terribly upset that Kennedy would not take office until January 20th. Could I set up a political circle? Or was it sterile to talk to us? How could we break off this conversation? He would not promise to see us again. I asked him to write down what he had said and more and to send it anonymously (just as Dr. Dan's manifestoes had been sent to me previously without my asking). He might. He might send a third party, but I doubt it.

Finally we urged him to make the most concrete suggestion he could think of. "It is moral to intervene," he said. "It is immoral not to. *Freiner la répression!*" And when I hear now the Voice of the Republic of Vietnam warn ominously all Vietnamese and foreigners not to harbor the "pseudo-intellectuals" who were party to the "Colonialist and Communist *coup*," I ask, what is the voice of America?

IN REVIEW

KISSINGER AND COUSINS: NO GUARANTEES EXIST

Paul Lauter

IN PUBLISHING two new books by Henry A. Kissinger and Norman Cousins, Harper and Brothers have suggested them as elements in a dialogue on the future of American foreign policy. They do well together; for each serves as a guide, indeed an antidote, to the limitations of the other. Without impertinence, one might well recommend the analytics of Mr. Kissinger's *The Necessity for Choice** to no one more strongly than Mr. Cousins, and the conclusions of Mr. Cousins' *The Last Defense*† to no one more compellingly than Mr. Kissinger.

Kissinger's diligent, detailed studies would provide an excellent remedy for unfortunate tendencies in Cousins to substitute rhetoric for analysis, and to oversimplify causation by blaming moral blindness in A-bombing Hiroshima and a failure of nerve in establishing a United Nations too weak for all of our woes. To one hopefully devoted to a sane nuclear policy, Mr. Kissinger's chapter on "The Problems of Arms Control" is bitter, even disheartening—but I think ultimately healthy—medicine. For he utterly destroys many of the inadequately examined notions about the dangers of the spread of nuclear weapons, a nuclear test ban, and the effectiveness of any total disarmament inspection system strangely depended upon by both the Eisenhower administration and its critics. It may ultimately amount to giving their devil his due, but even Mr. Kissinger's bitterest critics will have to admit that he has done much to dispel the fog in which debates on disarmament continue to be conducted.

Unlike some other debunkers of disarmament proposals, however, Mr. Kissinger is not out to defend present United States policy. No one has provided a more trenchant or biting dissection of the bankruptcy of American policy than Kissinger in his first two chapters. The causes for those failures he historically locates—in a chapter "On Negotiations"—in American isolationism combined with American convictions that everyone—including hungry, dynamic peoples—agrees in believing a static, undefined "peace" to be "natural," its advantages self-evident, and that final, definite solutions to world problems are available if only the right men could be elected. Such rigid and innocent United States reliance on personalities and summitry Kissinger totally devastates. He also warns against many of the other axioms and techniques

* *The Necessity for Choice: Prospects of American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1961). \$5.00.

† *The Last Defense in a Nuclear Age* (New York, 1961). \$3.00.

Kissinger and Cousins

that have dominated United States foreign policy for the past fifteen years; against making easy assumptions about Soviet domestic changes or splits in the Communist bloc; against Dulles-like rigidity or frantic, ill-advised quests for ever-new positions.

Mr. Kissinger's logic also chops away at the incredible delusions which characterize American military strategy. He shows the defects of "massive nuclear," "graduated," or "indirect" retaliation, and (less successfully) of guerrilla resistance as "limited war" (i.e., war which does not threaten national survival immediately) strategies. Unfortunately, however, his own approach to meeting such conflicts—full "local defense"—he does not subject to the same logical scrutiny with which he destroys his opponents' positions. He insists that "many of the assumptions regarding the impossibility of local defense are either fallacious or exaggerated" (p. 74), but one must question, to begin with, his unsupported counterassertion that the "free world" is still superior in "total available manpower." Conservative estimates might place Communist-bloc population advantage at over 200 million, and the size of Russian, Chinese, and satellite armies cannot be denied; whence, then, Mr. Kissinger's wishful estimate? Even if one agrees that such "limited war" forces would be sufficient in Europe—and is "limited war" really possible there?—one cannot join in Mr. Kissinger's hope that "the position of other areas can be improved through their own forces and increases in the American limited war capability." No doubt he has in mind our glorious successes in organizing Republic of Korea and Laotian armies. In making his argument he does not seem to consider that armies are only as strong militarily as their countries are politically and socially and that limited Communist aggression has been directed precisely at those areas which verge on the politically indefensible. In any case we probably cannot secure—and this Mr. Kissinger implicitly admits—all areas against "limited" aggression. And this probability casts doubt on his entire "local defense" strategy, for if we can secure only certain areas, we will surely continue to find the not-fully-secured areas gradually being won or worn away from us, like Cuba, possibly until positions in which "limited war" can be fought disappear.

To bolster his ideas of local military defense, Mr. Kissinger posits an expectation, strangely enough for such a power strategist, that the "political penalties" of antagonizing uncommitted nations and increasing mobilization of Western resources will help to deter limited Communist aggression in "gray areas" like the Middle East and southeast Asia. The lessons of Indo-China, and particularly now of Laos, undermine such an assumption. For the pattern of Communist penetration is not Korea; even in contiguous areas they have normally not attacked head-on, but have linked their military actions to those of internal sympathizers. Far from antagonizing uncommitted countries, they have often—as in Laos, even for some in Korea—made out an apparently legitimate case for their activities. And as for Western mobilization, it would

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probably have to be strained to its utmost—in man-power and conventional fire-power—if it follows Mr. Kissinger's plans.

And this raises further problems about his "limited war" strategy. The very degree of military spending it would increasingly entail might seriously inhibit our ability to correct the political and social instabilities which continue to undermine our attempts to build up local "limited war" capabilities. Moreover, Mr. Kissinger seems nowhere to have considered the dangerous internal effects on American democracy that his combined "limited" and total war strategies would involve. He blames our failure to build up a capacity for local defense solely on our desire to maintain high and soft living standards. No doubt this is partially true; but there are many good reasons to believe—C. Wright Mills has presented some of them—that precisely the kind of military build-up Mr. Kissinger requires—especially extended over an indefinite future—would subvert the very democratic procedures and freedoms it is designed to protect. It is a rule of thumb I have seen little evidence to doubt that the greater the power of a necessarily autocratic military, the smaller the chances for the survival of democracy.

One wonders, thus, whether Mr. Kissinger has not fallen into the same wishful, self-justifying interpretation of evasive and multitudinous factors he diagnoses as the main disease suffered by other military strategists. At any rate, the case he makes for defense through "limited war" capability must be viewed with continuing scepticism. And that scepticism even more profoundly applies to the other half of his tandem defense: massive nuclear forces for deterring total war.

Basic American strategy, for Kissinger, should aim at producing a stalemate of mutually invulnerable retaliatory forces. To this goal of retaliatory equilibrium should be directed, oddly enough, not only our attempts to overcome the "missile gap" through dispersal, hardening, and mobility of our forces, but also our efforts to establish certain forms of arms control! As Kissinger himself shows, however, the volatility of modern technology makes invulnerability a will-o'-the-wisp—here today, crushed tomorrow. And the advantages of upsetting such a balance lie with dynamic, offensive power rather than with *status quo* power like that of the United States. Thus even the ideal deterrent Mr. Kissinger hopes for will forever threaten to fall about the heads of those it is supposed to shield.

As if a world in which missiles rush across the land on flatcar and truck, and presumably float, like last year's pacifists, on barges behind the Derby contestants, in which populations burrow ever deeper with their weapons into the earth—as if this world were not hectic enough, instability is climaxed by the fact that "deterrence" is basically not a military but a psychological matter. For it comes down to what you can make a potential opponent think, or think you think. So dud ICBM's believed to be real are as good as the McCoy. Such behavior ends on the brink of absurdity by trying to calculate under what cir-

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cumstances we would rationally act irrationally—or rather convince the opponent that rationally we would act irrationally. Thus deterrence departs from what might be called strategy into areas of psychology where, as Kissinger shows elsewhere in examining results of the Camp David meetings, coherent calculation and foresight become almost impossible even on the rare occasions when totally rational men like Mr. Kissinger himself have their fingers on the triggers. Yet it is not on such ephemeral calculations that Mr. Kissinger would have us hang the future of our nation, if not that of the world.

No doubt Mr. Kissinger intends his careful logic as a model for approaching such shaky propositions, but one wonders if, perhaps haunted by the very inadequacy of human logic to comprehend so many shifting variables, he has not overcompensated. Examine the chilling chart in which he sets up various relative states of U.S. and U.S.S.R. retaliatory capability against the hypothetical outcome of all-out war and the ability of the United States to deter all-out and limited wars for each relative state. Two defects of this method appear clearly. Strategy does, despite frequent denials, approach a kind of inhuman, desperate game:

[The aggressor] can attack on a scale which makes the threatened retaliation appear to involve disproportionate risks. More importantly, he has the opportunity to engage in blackmail. And the effect of blackmail is to force the threatened side to make the next move. Henceforth, the potential victim faces the dilemma of interpreting the opponent's intentions. He must determine whether the aggressor "means" his threat. Although the aggressor cannot be certain that the defender will not retaliate, the defender cannot be certain that the aggressor does not mean *his* threat. (p. 41)

"Your city is threatened, Sir." "Then I shall move my Polaris."

More important, the "strategist" trying to establish mathematical certainty in an erratic world too often is tempted into operating with oversimplified stereotypes: the "free world" (Chiang, Franco, et al.), the "enemy," even their positions. While he can avoid rigidity, his strategy may nonetheless fall out of touch with things as they exist not in charts but in reality. In such cases he can also more readily than others become a victim of what some psychologists have called the "self-fulfilling prophecy." Regarding a mentally ill person as a stereotypic violent maniac, the doctor may act toward him as if he were *actually* what he appears to be *stereotypically*; the doctor's approach may thus induce precisely the violent conduct he expects of his patient. So in international relations assumptions, like those implicit in Mr. Kissinger's charts, about Russia's intransigence and her eagerness to blast helpless Americans like helpless Hungarians—while they may be all too true—may also help induce the very hostility supposed to be ameliorated.

This psychological problem seems to me to infect Kissinger's terribly logical critique of disarmament. He assumes the Soviet Union would cheat to gain

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tactical advantage. Perhaps so; but if we assume they will, the likelihood of their so doing becomes greater. That aside, one must ask what end a presumed advantage would serve. Blackmail could be prevented by a sufficiently powerful force of an international federation such as Cousins outlines. The opponent could be destroyed. But would such victory, however meaningful in today's world, be so meaningful in a disarmed world? Would the Russians have so much to gain in such a world by destroying what is no longer a menace to their legitimate security? I do not know the answers to such questions, nor does Mr. Kissinger; but his stereotypes inhibit his even asking them in any meaningful way.

Now it is not this reviewer's purpose to pursue Mr. Kissinger's brilliant account of the number of strategies on the warhead of a missile. To do so would lead to a sterile evasion of first questions and principles. I simply want to suggest, however inadequately, that there are reasons sufficient in the very strategic grounds on which they are based for *not* wanting to depend for survival on Mr. Kissinger's plans. And there are, reaching for Cousins once again, more basic political, social and above all moral grounds for doubting Mr. Kissinger's strategy.

The question that inescapably haunts one reading his book is just *why* are we planning methods to annihilate hundreds of millions of people. Mr. Kissinger's immediate answer would be, I think, to maintain national integrity, ultimately because he believes that maintenance of our nation best insures preservation of Western democratic values, whereas our destruction dooms those values. He is thus willing to embrace Armageddon, if it comes to that, before a Communist takeover. Such a conclusion arises directly from the alternative results his policy might have. If the balance of terror which he wishes to stabilize fails, we face destruction at least of the United States if not of the world. And nuclear holocaust, despite the survival hopes of Herman Kahn's *On Thermonuclear War*, would so alter our society and values as to make them unrecognizable.

Unfortunately, even if Mr. Kissinger's deterrents succeed in perpetuating a strategic *status quo*, they provide absolutely no guarantee of the salvation of our standards, let alone of our values. For it may be argued that insofar as we remain a *status quo* power those values lie open to attrition at home and abroad: at home by the increasingly anti-democratic tendencies of a fortress state; abroad by continual nibbling of dynamic-minded opponents. Such an argument may paradoxically combine with the persuasiveness of Mr. Kissinger's attack on the possibility of controlled disarmament to drive many from the assumptions which underlie his reliance on massive force. For those who would, like Mr. Kissinger, preserve Western values but see his Hobson's choice as a threat to them will be forced to admit—one writes the words with greatest trepidation—that the survival of the United States as a nation as we know it cannot, for the sake of our values, continue as the be-all and end-all of our policy.

This argument cannot be dismissed as sentimental idealism. If the chief

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defect of Mr. Kissinger's policy is his acceptance of the United States' present position as a *status quo* power and the ultimate deterioration that position involves, the chief advantage of acting, as Cousins wishes, on moral and humanitarian grounds regardless of limited national goals, is that such an effort provides probably the only means for the United States to adopt a dynamic role in world affairs. Such a role involves all the strategic liabilities and built-in dangers Kissinger has noted in any disarmament arrangement—with even the most elaborate inspections and controls. Even so, the alternatives which a plan like Cousins' seems to establish strike one person—and here we can talk only for ourselves—as infinitely preferable to those growing out of Kissinger's strategy.

If Cousins' or a similar plan for staged, UN controlled, inspected, and policed (by a serious international force) disarmament failed, a Communist take-over might result. This could well sink our civilization into an Orwellian nightmare in which new power struggles could arise. But it might not. However divergent American and Soviet techniques of political control, are the lives and worlds of most Russians—or even most Hungarians—so violently, so eternally, different from ours that the radical changes engendered by a totally new world situation will leave them, and potentially us, no more than perpetual slaves to immutable masters? As Kissinger is quick to point out, there is no guarantee whatever that disarmament or even Soviet world domination would move Communism toward liberalism as we understand it; but neither is there any reason to despair absolutely over developing within or from Communism (as from other past monolithic religio-feudal systems) a sense of human dignity and the importance of individual conscience. Besides, failure of a control system to stop Soviet aggression, even United States unilateral disarmament, is not equivalent, as Kissinger seems to think, to surrender. Other methods of resistance *and persuasion* than force of arms can prevail as Sir Stephan King-Hall has suggested in his *Defense in the Nuclear Age*. Even today's—or tomorrow's—methods of mass thought-control will probably not be able forever to damp the sparks of freedom and humane values. Russians are free to read a poet like Whitman, a poet whose freedom *we* are not yet able to accept or assimilate. And who can predict the power of an ideal acted upon to triumph over force and suppression; who could have foreseen the magnificent vindications, the influence past suffering, past death itself, of Moses and Socrates and Jesus. No guarantees exist, but surely the worst in this respect is far better than the worst (if not the best) in Kissinger's strategy.

And if a plan like that of Cousins succeeds—if political, psychological, social, human factors dispel the strategic dangers Kissinger has so completely developed—we can envision clearly a world of peace and plenty.

Such hopes are not to be dismissed as Utopian rhetoric. In reading these books we should remember that sermons—from the Mount or the *Saturday Review*—always run the risk of sounding sentimental and fatuous. And analyses which proclaim their realism and maintain a fierce logic will always have the

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persuasive advantage of seeming even more realistic than they may—or indeed can—be. As we hold Cousins' hopes to the test of Kissinger's logic, so we must hold Kissinger's realism to the more vital test of Cousins' ideals. And on our unguaranteed conclusions we must act to shape our peace.

THE PROBLEM OF PICTORIAL LANGUAGE

Vincent Tomas

E. H. GOMBRICH's *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*,* is a handsomely produced volume. For a book of this kind, it is relatively inexpensive. There are 319 illustrations, 18 in color. As for the text, it is must reading for anyone with a theoretical interest in the visual arts and the history of styles.

The author, who is now director of the Warburg Institute, is overwhelmingly learned. In developing his theme, which is "to analyze afresh, in psychological terms, what is actually involved in image making and image reading," he is able to draw with lightness and grace upon a rich acquaintance with works of art, the history of art, Greek and Roman literature, psychology, philosophy, comic strips, and, best of all, common sense.

He tells us that he has for long been intrigued by "the mysterious way in which shapes and marks can be made to signify and suggest other things beyond themselves." We look at a drawing consisting, say, of a circle inside of which there are two dots, a vertical line, and a horizontal line; and we perceive "a face." The dots by themselves do not look like eyes; the vertical line does not look like a nose. Yet the configuration is perceived as "a face." If the horizontal line which does not by itself look like a mouth were curved upwards, we would perceive "a smiling face." If it were curved downwards, we would perceive "a grouchy face." Certainly this is mysterious. What is the explanation?

Gombrich points out that if we look at realistic or *trompe l'œil* paintings, in which we feel that "every blade of grass" or "every stitch of the clothing" has been reproduced on canvas, the mystery still remains. The difference between them and the circle with two dots and two lines inside is only one of degree. No painter can hope to reproduce or perfectly imitate nature on canvas, for nature is infinite. Nor can he hope, as the impressionist did, to reproduce on canvas what he sees when he looks at the world with "innocent eyes." The innocent eye which can yet see is a fiction. "For seeing is never just registering." The representational painter is neither reproducing what he knows nor what he sees with innocent eyes. What, then, is he doing?

According to Gombrich, he is using a pictorial language which, for those

* New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1960. \$10.00.

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who know how to read it, describes reality. The difference between two styles of painting is like the difference between English and German. Both can be used to convey the same information.

To say of a drawing that it is a correct view of Tivoli does not mean, of course, that Tivoli is bounded by wiry lines. It means that those who understand the notation will derive *no false information* from the drawing—whether it gives the contour in a few lines or picks out “every blade of grass” as Richter’s friends wanted to do.

Again, a painting or statue is like a cryptogram. The artist as it were encodes a message, and the beholder of his work decodes it. In both coding and decoding, habits, expectations, mental sets play a fundamental role. In the case of the artist he will, first, tend to see his subject in terms of his technique: “Sitting in front of his motif, pencil in hand . . . he will tend to see his motif in terms of lines, while, brush in hand, he sees it in terms of masses.” Second, he will tend to see things in terms of schemata, a “vocabulary” largely derived from other pictures he has seen, perhaps copied. Thus, Heath’s drawing of a rhinoceros (1789), although done from life, unmistakably shows the influence of Dürer’s fanciful woodcut (1515), which depicts an armor-plated beast. Constable wrote of Suffolk, “It is a most delightful landscape for a painter. I fancy I see Gainsborough in every hedge and hollow tree.” As for Gainsborough himself, he “saw the lowland scenery of East Anglia in terms of Dutch paintings which he arduously studied and copied.”

The pictorial language, and along with it style, evolves as a result of the “inventions” and “discoveries” of experimenting innovators who depart from tradition and introduce methods of representation which produce an effect of greater lifelikeness or illusion. For example, Cuyp discovered how to render lightning effectively in oil paint. In his *Dordrecht in a Storm* there is “a configuration which, in the context, became the valid cryptogram for that unpaintable glare. On that point, then, there was no need to experiment any more.”

The beholder who reads or deciphers paintings also comes to them with habits and mental sets, and with a propensity to project images (to “close the gap”) on a screen. These projections are like hypotheses in science. The picture in itself is ambiguous. It presents a set of clues which we must interpret. An interpretation is implicitly tested for consistency with all the clues, and if the reading makes sense—if, that is to say, like a good hypothesis it accounts for all of the data—we settle on it:

Where we do not find this consistency we immediately cast about for a frame of reference which will provide it, we revise our hypothesis about the type of “message” which confronts us. Within the context of our culture we do this so automatically that we are hardly aware of the process itself.

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In cubist paintings, this process is systematically frustrated. This is accomplished by the deliberate

introduction of contrary clues which will resist all attempts to apply the test of consistency. Try as we may to see the guitar or the jug suggested to us as a three-dimensional object and thereby to transform it, we will always come across a contradiction somewhere which compels us to start afresh. . . . The function of representational clues in cubist paintings is not to inform us about guitars and apples, nor to stimulate our tactile sensations. It is to narrow down the range of possible interpretations till we are forced to accept the flat pattern with all its tensions.

If there is a radical shortcoming in Gombrich's interesting and in most respects illuminating study, I suggest that it is his complete disregard of the theoretical considerations which motivated, in part, twentieth century "modern art." Perhaps the chief characteristic that comes to mind when we think of this art is that it is a "retreat from likeness." Thus, the representational paintings Wyeth is now making will be said to be contemporary, not modern, while the non-objective paintings Kandinsky made before World War I, through they are scarcely contemporary, will be said to be modern.

Hand in hand with the development of non-representational painting and sculpture, there was developed a *theory* which in its extreme form maintains, as Clive Bell put it in 1914, that "representation is always, and everywhere, irrelevant in a work of art." There are some indications—perhaps Gombrich's book is one—that the pendulum has started to swing back, but the *avant-garde* opinion for more than a half-century has been that if painters and sculptors are conscious of their true mission, which is distinct from that of literature on the one hand and of photography on the other, they cease to portray things of the visible world and strive instead to create works which are, in Ozenfant's words, "independent of the external world" and "as far as possible removed from nature."

A striking fact about the bulk of the literature in which this theory has been adumbrated or explicitly stated, from Whistler's "Ten O'Clock" lecture to the present, is that while representation in the visual arts has been consistently disparaged, it is only very rarely that what is meant by the term has been clearly defined or that what is going on when we perceive likenesses to familiar things when we are looking at pictures has been subjected to such careful scrutiny as Gombrich gives it. It is unfortunate, therefore, that it is not at all clear from Gombrich's book whether he disassociates himself from one of the dogmas in this literature. The dogma is that when a beholder sees a likeness in a picture, which he may then refer to, using expressions such as "a bearded man," "a nude woman," "a bowl of fruit," "flowers," and so on, he is not attending to what is in the picture but is, as Whistler said, "looking through" the picture at what it represents. To do this is objectionable because

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the picture is then functioning not as an aesthetic object but as a mere sign-vehicle which puts us into mediate contact with a subject outside the picture. And if, then, the picture is regarded as a good one, it will be so regarded not for aesthetically relevant reasons but for the same reason that a map is regarded as good—because, as Gombrich writes in connection with a view of Tivoli, it gives us *no false information*. From this it is but a short step to Ortega's conclusion that "preoccupation with the human content of a work is in principle incompatible with aesthetic enjoyment proper," and to the conclusion that if painters wish to discourage the Philistine tendency of viewers to use paintings as if they were maps, which yield information about the region they represent, they should create paintings "as far as possible removed from nature."

But the dogma, like the conclusions it is used to justify, is, surely, mistaken. Consider what after all can be meant by the metaphor "looking through a picture." As has been suggested, one "looks through" a picture if one uses the picture in the way that one normally uses a map—if one reads it for the purpose of extracting information from it. Now, one is not looking through a picture merely because one beholds in it what for want of a better word one calls a "likeness," a word which in this context misleadingly suggests that one is comparing what is "in the picture" with something "outside the picture." When, while looking at a portrait, we behold a "likeness," which we describe, say, as "a bearded man with a wen on his cheek," are we extracting information from the likeness? Does it for us "stand for" or "represent" some bearded man with a wen on his cheek? Do we, then, because we have looked at the picture, come to believe that there is or was a man of this description? Yes, if for us the picture is virtually the same thing as a map. But no, if it is for us an aesthetic object. In the latter case, despite the fact that the portrait *presents* (not represents) "a bearded man with a wen on his cheek," we are not engaged in extracting "information" from the picture.

The analogies Gombrich makes between paintings and maps, cryptograms, verbal languages and other information communicating devices can, therefore, be seriously misleading. For example, he writes (*italics mine*):

Need we infer . . . that there is no such thing as an objective likeness?

That it makes no sense to ask, for instance, whether Chiang Yee's view of Derwentwater is more or less correct than the nineteenth century lithograph in which the formulas of classical landscapes were applied to the same task? It is a tempting conclusion and one which recommends itself to the teacher of art appreciation *because it brings home to the layman how much of what we call "seeing" is conditioned by habits and expectations.*

Gombrich's own view is that it does make sense to ask the question. For him, if both views of Derwentwater, despite their stylistic differences, convey to

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a competent beholder the same information, they are equally "objective." That is, they are equally accurate as descriptions of Derwentwater.

But to a teacher of art appreciation, the question might be said to "make no sense," not for the reason Gombrich gives, and which we have underlined in the quotation above, but for the reason that when we aesthetically appreciate the two views, the question of what are the facts about Derwentwater simply does not arise. If our interest in paintings, including so-called representational paintings, is aesthetic, we read the visual language that the artist employed in the same way that we read novels, wherein language is used fictively. We do not read it in the way, as Gombrich unfortunately suggests, that we read history books, wherein language is used to convey information.

STEREOTYPES AND JEWS: FAGIN AND THE MAGICIAN OF LUBLIN

Jules Chametzky

THE SUBJECT of Mr. Rosenberg's book, *From Shylock to Svengali: Jewish Stereotypes in English Fiction*,* seems fairly uninteresting considered as literary history; as social history, however, it is potentially fascinating. Mr. Rosenberg has chosen the narrower path, although he does enliven it with wit and insight, and comes to a serious conclusion: that the "image of the Jew in English literature has been a depressingly uniform and static phenomenon, and that the . . . variations which were struck upon in it the course of centuries fade into relative insignificance in the face of its monumental durability."

Rosenberg is primarily concerned with two dominant images of the Jew—as criminal and as saint—in the English novel between 1795 and 1895, although he also traces the changes rung on the less uniform and static image of the Wandering Jew. In his study of the dominant stereotypic images, Rosenberg is led back inevitably to prototypes in dramatic literature before the nineteenth century. The more persistent, and by his standards more successful, convention during the nineteenth century was that of the Jew-villain (most notably Fagin, Svengali, and in part Scott's Isaac), whose antecedents were Shylock and beyond him, of course, the Judas and Herod-derived bogeys, murderers, fiends of medieval dramatic and balladic literature. The image of the benevolent Jew, most notable in the work of George Eliot, began with the conscious efforts of Richard Cumberland at the end of the eighteenth century and Maria Edgeworth at the beginning of the nineteenth to produce, from sentimental and humane motives, an effective contrast to the Jew as villain or criminal. The trouble with these efforts to depict paragons of virtue

* Stanford University Press. \$6.50.

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—as other writers have found—is that the characters produced tended to be incredible, usually long-winded, boring. Too self-consciously correctives of the older stereotype, the new Jews were bloodless characters; creatures only of the authors' idea, they were not dramatically or imaginatively realized. Rosenberg summarizes this development by observing that "Shylock's 'ducats and daughter's' cry is at least a form of dramatic art; Sheva's [the worthy Hebrew of Cumberland's *The Jew*] 'Jews are outcasts' is a platform speech."

Confronted with the obvious hold the Jew-villain has had on the imaginative life of English writers and audiences in the past—can Riah, Sheva, Daniel Deronda compete in this respect with the vivid, memorable Shylock, Fagin, Svengali?—we (and Rosenberg) are moved to ask why and how this came about. It is not enough to say villainy is always compelling, or that bogeys tap deeper sources of our unconscious than do saints, for though there is surely a large measure of truth in these observations one can always think of qualifying exceptions. Rosenberg suggests that the essential difference is "between art and polemic, metaphor and literalism." It seems to me we cannot accept this either as a full explanation of the power of one stereotype or the relative weakness of another. We have to deal, I think, with the specific content of a stereotype along with the cultural and historic conditions governing the use of that content. St. Paul polemicized, Shakespeare imagined; Cumberland made speeches and puppets, C. P. Snow (whose *The Conscience of the Rich* provides a postscript to this study) makes scenes and people. Does this not suggest time-conditioned possibilities rather than differences primarily due to individual temperaments and abilities? A new point of view, a new approach to a subject, will often seem unassimilated, will be polemical and literal, but how could it be otherwise? Social psychologists, if not cultural historians, will tell us that journalism and platform speeches, the hammering away at stereotypes and conventions (accompanied, of course, by changing conditions of life) on the sub-literary level, are probably necessary and unavoidable before artistic adaptation to metaphor and symbol is possible.

The "good" Jew and the "bad" Jew were equally non-human; the image of the Saintly Jew, however, suffered the added liability of a short heritage. He was no less a fantasy of his creator, but lacking the long investment of Christian myth, dream and nightmare enveloping those other Jews, he was, for the English writer in the nineteenth century, not yet the stuff literature is made of. James Baldwin has said that the Negro in America is a dream of the whites, and Richard Wright's last book was called *The Long Dream*. Both the sleeper and the dream that haunts him must eventually pay a price. The Jew, in both aspects studied by Rosenberg, was a dream of Western Christian culture; and the price has been paid. Perhaps we are at last at the point of waking up and our writers are only now free to wrestle with the Jew as with other real people—contradictory, tough, alive and *there*.

Isaac Bashevis Singer and Yasha Mazur, the hero of *The Magician of*

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Lublin,* Singer's latest novel, are incontrovertibly alive and present for us in an exceptionally fine translation from the Yiddish published recently by The Noonday Press. To those already familiar with Singer's previously translated work—a large-canvased realistic novel (*The Family Moskat*); a psychological and allegorical novel in a medieval setting (*Satan in Goray*); and a collection of short fiction (*Gimpel the Fool and Other Stories*)—that *The Magician of Lublin* is an extraordinary and beautiful book will come as no surprise. It is a taut, rigorous, controlled work. The main narrative covers twenty-four hours in the life of Yasha Mazur, a Jewish magician from the town of Lublin who travels and performs in Poland in the 1890's. The setting and the people are unmistakably authentic, and Singer manages to make almost every line rich with symbolic suggestion. What might surprise the American reader, although it shouldn't, is Singer's deep and apparently unshakeable moral commitment.

We know, for example, that the fine simplicity of *Gimpel the Fool's* acceptance of himself, the world, and God cannot be reproduced by any serious American writer today, and are willing to ascribe the difference to Singer's roots in the Yiddish culture of the Poland he left in 1935, and to the language he still uses; what disarms one about *The Magician* is its contemporaneity. Yasha is one of us, he speaks to our condition: restless, bored, contradictory in thought and impulse, sceptical, amoral, playing God with his life and others', seeking transcendence (or ultimate fulfillment) of his earth-clogged existence through magic, tricks, mind, love, self-indulgence, he could have stepped out of a novel by Dostoyevsky or a French existentialist. But then, when his egocentricity and his desire lead to the collapse of all his plans and fine-spun relationships, to death, lechery, and despair, Yasha sees the hand of God, is transformed, and becomes—in the book's epilogue—Reb Jacob the Penitent.

Yasha returns from the world and his affairs to his faithful Jewish Orthodox wife. He grows a beard and sidelocks, puts on a wide fringed garment, a long gabardine, and a velvet skullcap, and then has himself bricked up with some few meager possessions in a doorless house four cubits by four cubits. Here he will presumably end his days in prayer, penance, and meditation; when the book ends, he has earned a reputation as Rabbi and saint, and has known God.

What are we to make of all this? Whether we read the book as a parable of the artist or as "a study of man's search for the Divine and of the perplexing ambiguities in his path" (to quote from the jacket), we are bound to be set a little off balance, perhaps be irritated. By having Yasha give up his art, can Singer mean that moral considerations outweigh those of art? And since Yasha's greatest disaster issues from the trauma of near conversion, and his rebirth depends on his knowing God through the most extreme adherence

* Translated by Elaine Gottlieb and Joseph Singer. (New York: The Noonday Press, 1960). \$1.65.

Old Songs in the New World

to the orthodox faith of his father, can Singer mean what this seems to mean? The answer to both questions, I am afraid, is a simple and unequivocal yes. It is this ability of Singer's to say yes (in soft accents, not in thunder), and make it stick, that sets him apart. It accounts too, I think, for much of the tension and strength of the book: the difficulty, pain, and complexity leading to the simple and unequivocal are never slighted, so we are drawn in and, for the space of the book, believe.

I wonder where Yasha would fit in Rosenberg's categories. Considered from his point of view, Yasha is a hodge-podge of stereotypes: literally a Wandering Jew at the outset, a Svengali (he knows hypnosis, has flashing eyes, is an artist, etc.), a villain, and finally a saint. Yet you prick him and he bleeds. Yasha starts as the same magically ambiguous figure, the outsider, familiar in nineteenth century English fiction. At the end, Yasha alone in his cell, an outsider to Jew and Gentile alike, might remind one of Cruikshank's drawing of Fagin in his condemned cell—"the picture of human evil left to reflect upon itself" (Rosenberg)—but at the same time one must be reminded of Alyosha and Father Zossima. Rather than a picture of human evil, through his humanity and suffering Yasha the Magician has become a saint—and possibly a Savior—for the God-seeker at last realizes that "every minute, every second, within him and outside, God signalizes His presence." Singer, writing as a Jew, transforms and illuminates the stereotypes.

OLD SONGS IN THE NEW WORLD

Margaret Irwin

"They thought the day so big, so big"—that line is not, I think, to be found in any version of the ballad on Old England's side of the Atlantic. It carries one straight away across the ocean into the unknown vastness of what was once a New World. The day was then "so big, so big," that men with their women and children would sail for weeks across the seas through tempests and hurricanes and, even worse, the crippling calms that let them rot, for lack of food or water, in ships smaller than modern pleasure boats. Yet their day, it was "so big," that they could explore an unknown continent, fight its unknown inhabitants, settle in it, make their own homes and laws; and then stretch out farther and farther yet, into the unknown land beyond, up its rivers bigger than many a sea, and its rocky mountains that tower into the setting sun.

These adventurers could bring few possessions with them. But they brought their memories of the songs that had been sung by their parents and grandparents and those before them; and in their turn sang them to their children and grandchildren; who went on singing them, not merely for generations but for centuries.

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The most astonishing thing in Mrs. Flanders' collection of these ballads,* as recorded from actual living persons, is the length of time their oral traditions have lasted, often far longer, I imagine, than in their original homes of England and Scotland. And not only by ear but in print, for we are told that broadsheets of that strange folk-tale, "The Elfin Knight," were being printed in the U. S. A. right up till the Mexican War in the 1840's.

But the living memory by word of mouth is the more fascinating. Words and tunes were mechanically recorded by Mrs. Flanders or her colleague Marguerite Olney (after 1939), not only in the 1930's and 1940's, but even as late as in the last decade of the 1950's; and for most of them she gives an extraordinary number of different versions, showing how they lived and grew in different minds down the long years, unlike verses printed in a broadsheet or book, and therefore finished with; but twisting this way and that, sometimes to tragedy, sometimes to farce, and sometimes losing the sense for the sake of the sound, with such casually dropped jewels of "beautiful nonsense" as "Every word goes merry in time," which again may turn into "Every globe goes merry in time—" or "Every rose [or grove] grows merry with time." There is no sense in these lines, but one wishes there were!

In her introduction Mrs. Flanders shows the most careful and loving scholarship: to take only one instance, she can trace an allusion to the Battle of Agincourt in a verse sung by a former cook in a lumber camp, though he himself and generations of its earlier singers had probably never heard of Agincourt. In fact the notes, both throughout the text and her introduction, are so interesting that I wish they had been four times as long.

Especially delightful are Mrs. Flanders' memories of how she collected the songs and from whom. There was the old lady who apologized for the tale of "Lizie Wan" or "Fair Lucy" with the remark, "It's no worse than you find in the Bible!" And an old man, who had been converted to the Puritan traditions of New England and had not sung "a worldly song" in forty years, had to strut up and down singing hymns to justify himself, before he would sing her "John Barleycorn"—surely the most pagan relic of fertility rites he could have chosen, had he but known it.

One man warned her that his would be "a deep song." Another forgot his song in the middle and said disconsolately he would have to go home and chew peppermints, until Mrs. Flanders got him to pick her plums for her, when suddenly, up in the plum-tree, he broke out singing again as he remembered the remaining verses.

The ballads themselves tell the same stories as were sung in England and Scotland before the first settlers crossed the Atlantic, though place-names have

* *Ancient Ballads Traditionally Sung in New England*, Vol. I—Child Ballads 1-51; compiled and edited by Helen Hartness Flanders, critical analyses by Tristram P. Coffin, music annotations by Bruno Nettl (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960). \$10.00.

Old Songs in the New World

been changed to give them new local color, as in "The Cruel Mother," which begins

In *New York* lived a lady fair,

and in "The Castle by the Sea," where the intended victim "wished she'd remained in *Boston* town." But the range of the stories has been limited in transit. The famous old ballads of battles and border-forays and sea-fights were naturally forgotten once their native hills and dales and shores were left behind. Though the new adventurers "thought the day so big, so big," the old stories that they remembered are mostly confined to the narrow tragedies of family life.

And *what* families! Oedipus has nothing on them, especially as his crimes were unwitting.

In these ballads, murder by a brother, a sister, a mother, a witch mother-in-law, a sweetheart, a daughter, are the conscious result of jealousy or incest or greed for money or just hate; and are told with all the zest of a detective story, and in the same technique; for the first verse tells the murder itself, and the last shows who is the really guilty party, generally in the form of a curse on other members of the family. Women are generally the worst, as if to forestall the later matriarchal tradition in America. "What is meaner than womankind?" is asked in one of the many riddle-songs; and the answer is that only "The Devil's meaner than womankind." Children come off better: "the pretty boy seven years old" foils the devil's riddles in "The False Knight on the Road." Mrs. Flanders gives this in the Irish version; unusual, since mostly these are in the native Irish; but I prefer the Scots refrain, "Quoth the wee boy and still he stood," since it gives the sturdy immovability of the schoolboy who can stand four-square with the loads of peat on his back, which he pretends are his school-books, and so cheat the Devil himself!

The comments of Tristram P. Coffin, who contributed the "Critical Analyses," are often full of humor as well as learning, as when he remarks on the "naive chivalry" of the "Outlandish Knight," a Bluebeard who has already murdered half a dozen kings' daughters, and will drown the seventh as soon as he has robbed her of her clothes, yet obeys her command to turn his back while she undresses—

For I don't think it fit for a *ruffing* like you
A naked lady to see,

—and so gives her the chance to pitch him over the cliff!

I disagree with the meaning that Dr. Coffin gives in the ballad of "Edward" as to the cause of the quarrel—

About a little bit of bush
That never would have grewed to a tree, tree, tree,
That never would have grewed to a tree.

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This surely refers not to the ill-treatment of the girl herself by "The Cruel Brother," but to the unborn child by him within her.

But other tales more lovely and loving crossed the seas, among them what Dr. Coffin has rightly called the most beautiful ballad of "The Three Ravens," which tells of a dead knight watched faithfully by his horse and hounds until he is joined by his lady, who

laid herself down by his side
And there she lay until she died.

That became reversed and debased in the grisly-comic version of "The Twa Corbies"—another change wrought by the twist of mind in the singer. Twists of memory also have caused a hotchpotch of confusion in the tragedy of "The Twa Sisters," who become "The Three Sisters," with their father as the wooer; and either they "all go to church together," or else one sister is drowned and the other two

fled beyond the seas
And died old maids among black savages.

Confusion in ballads can lead not only to farce but to false history. An old Scots lady told me she could never forgive Mary Queen of Scots for executing poor Mary Hamilton when she killed her new-born infant by Darnley, as told in the ballad of "The Four Maries"! "It's done Queen Mary a *great deal of harm in Scotland*, I assure you!" So I put a preface note to my book on Mary and Bothwell, *The Gay Galliard*, to explain that the song concerned the Mary Hamilton who was later executed in *Russia*; and that there was never any such execution at the court of Queen Mary, whose "Four Maries" were Beton, Seton, Fleming, and Livingstone, but *no* Mary Hamilton! The Mary Hamilton story travelled back from Russia to Scotland 200 years later, was given local color by mention of the Tolbooth and Canongate, so was transferred back to the reign of Mary, the last Queen of Scots. But I never met any readers who have observed this note in my book. I only hope they will pay more attention to the notes in this book of ballads. If they don't they will miss a lot of interest and amusement as well as information.

AMERICAN COMMUNISM— RUTHENBERG TO BROWDER

Howard Quint

TO DATE no one has written an adequate history of either the Democratic or Republican parties during the period between the end of World War I and the beginning of the presidency of Herbert Hoover. Yet we now possess for these very same years a definitive history of the Communist Party of the

American Communism

United States, a study which, in truth, tells us far more about the inner workings of the American Communist movement than we know about those of our major political parties. Author of this brilliantly conceived and still to be completed history of American Communism is Theodore Draper, associate editor of *The Reporter*. His first volume, *The Roots of American Communism* (1957), relates the story from the origins of the movement, when American radicals were literally intoxicated by the success of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, to 1923 when it had become apparent that Communism was not destined, for the time being at least, to sweep on from Russia to world revolution. The second volume, *American Communism and Soviet Russia: The Formative Period*,* brings the account up to 1929 when the "Lovestone faction" was deposed and Earl Browder, a second-line functionary, was elevated by Moscow to the party leadership.

The second volume is appropriately titled. The American Communist movement *was* completely dominated from Moscow, in theory by the Comintern but in practice by the ruling Soviet faction which controlled the international organization. Although countless internecine conflicts occurred among the American comrades—struggles in which the infighting was unbelievably bitter—what the Moscow experts dictated for the American party became the latter's gospel with respect both to dogma and tactics. Moreover, to the constant discomfort and bewilderment of the American Communists, the Moscow line constantly zigged and zagged. Those who basked momentarily in Russian favor on one day might discover themselves on the next nakedly exposed to the merciless thrusts of ever alert and vindictive party foes. A Communist leader who found himself out of favor with Moscow invariably abjured his past errors as quickly as possible and waited for a favorable turn in Comintern policies, one that very well might uphold the correctness of the doctrinal or tactical views for which he initially had been condemned.

If the American Communist leaders lacked any one quality—and they lacked many—it was intellectual integrity. Time after time, the Moscow theoreticians exhibited a fantastic ignorance of political, economic and social conditions in the United States. Yet so imbued were the American Communists with the wisdom of Moscow—after all the Russians *had* brought off a successful revolution—that they accepted the dictates of the Soviet leaders with hardly a murmur. Nothing, for example, is more indicative of this slavish subservience than their acceptance of Stalin's policy of "self-determination" for American Negroes in the South.

As a small sect (the party membership in 1927 was approximately 9500) the Communists sought to expand their mass influence, when the Comintern so willed it, by infiltrating political movements such as the Farmer-Labor and Progressive parties, by boring from within the American Federation of Labor, or by organizing "front" organizations. The latter allowed the Communists to

* New York: Viking Press, 1960. \$8.50.

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work with and to proselytize non-Communists of the political left and at the same time to preserve their doctrinal purity. In instances where the Communists co-operated politically with other groups, they helped in the end to wreck them. Had Henry Wallace been less concerned with oriental mysticism and more with the history of the Communists of the 'twenties, he would have avoided their support like the plague in his ill-starred bid for the presidency in 1948.

One is treated to a rare display of historical analysis in the manner in which Draper links the fortunes of such American party leaders as Charles Ruthenberg, William Z. Foster, Jay Lovestone, Ben Gitlow, John Pepper, William Weinstone and James Cannon to the internal struggle for power in the Soviet Union among Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin and Stalin. To be associated with the losing side in an internal Soviet controversy, and this was immediately reflected in the Comintern, meant political disgrace and, on occasion, banishment from the party. For some American Communists the latter was a fate as bad as death since the whole context of their lives was inextricably bound up with the party. Yet in view of the constant willingness of party functionaries to break old friendships and to denounce one another in order to obtain from Moscow a nod of approval, more often than not given begrudgingly, it is almost impossible to work up even a semblance of sympathy for any of them.

American Communism and Soviet Russia is a volume in the Communism in American Life series subsidized by the Fund for the Republic. The directors of the Fund have received more than their money's worth from Mr. Draper's first two volumes. At least one more is due from him.

MR

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